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F. E. S. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS—1981

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Thinking about what to say in a Presidential Address was a very humbling experience. At first glance it seemed the ideal opportunity to present some new or unusual information about the insects of particular interest to me, but I hastily abandoned that idea; I have been totally out of research for a number of years and, in truth, only rarely get into the laboratory at all.

The second possibility that occurred to me was that I might discuss some of the problem areas in entomological work. But there seems little point in bringing up problems unless we can see them from a new perspective or offer some innovative solutions.

In desperation I even toyed with the idea of talking about women in entomology. But I feel very strongly that there is no reason to view a woman entomologist any differently than a male entomologist—they have the same interests, the same frustrations, the same curiosity, and the same delight in accomplishments. So I think the less attention paid to that subject, the better!

All of which leaves me with only a state of the union—state of the society—report. This is not all that bad; surely the members want and need to know what the society is doing and what it plans to do in the future.

I have probably had the easiest year as president of anyone in the last decade. I was preceded by a series of presidents who gave a great deal of thought to the purpose of your Society and who were deeply committed to improving it for the benefit of all members. These officers have seen to it that the by-laws were revised to make the organization more effective. These revisions should be completed by vote of the members at this meeting; these officers who preceded me have gone through the trauma of changing printers and changing editors; they have instigated and encouraged a long-range planning committee and a committee to encourage inter-American cooperation. With these matters settled, the Executive Committee has been able this year to stand back a little and think about what we’re doing and what we should be doing. One conclusion has been that we need to broaden our membership and the scope of our programs, to try to bring together more of the diverse groups working with insects and insect problems.

We have set about this in three ways: first, we have tried to include in the program papers from areas not usually represented there, such as commercial pest control, mosquito control and industry.

Secondly, we are having this year, at the instigation of Dr. Peters, the first of what we would like to think will become an Annual Past Presidents’ Breakfast. It is our hope that these individuals who have been deeply involved in the Society in the past and have watched it over a number of years will be able to see the long range direction in which we’re moving and will have firm ideas about whether we’re on target.

Our third effort has been to appoint a committee to investigate the feasibility of having a Florida Congress of Entomology, an opportunity to bring
together entomologists in different kinds of work and to expose them to each
other's ideas, philosophies, problems, limitations and abilities.

When you think about it there is an amazing diversity in the practice of
entomology in Florida. There are entomologists doing taxonomic and life
history studies, curating museum collections, there are teachers and stu-
dents; there are entomologists employed in giving advice, performing and
researching control of crop insects, lawn and ornamental insects, citrus in-
sects, household pests, structural pests such as termites, mosquito control,
beekeeping and honey production, control of disease bearing insects, espe-
cially for the military services, and forest insects; there are entomologists
testing pesticides to get efficacy data; and some are marketing control
products—a diverse group, yes, but one with a strong common interest and a
need for each to know what the others are doing and learning.

Dr. Selhime chairs the Florida Congress Committee and will report on
its activities this year at the business meeting.

We feel the proposed Congress has tremendous potential. Many of the
problems that we encounter in our work, no matter where we are employed,
arise because of conflicts between the philosophies, responsibilities and legal
restraints of the various agencies and organizations involved in entomolog-
ical work. Just in mosquito control alone—the area with which I am most
familiar—our work is directly affected by or is tangential to that of DFR,
DNR, DACS, EPA and the U.S. Corps of Engineers. Getting to know the
individuals in these various agencies and what their responsibilities and
problems are is a first essential step toward solving our own problems.

Each of us has a tendency toward focusing in on our own particular prob-
lem without seeing the whole picture. I was more than a little horrified
recently to read an editorial in an aerial applicator's publication in which
the author made the point that while farmers grow their crops on their own
land, beekeepers use the property of others to produce their crop of honey.
His contention was that while a pesticide applicator should avoid killing
bees where practical, that his purpose was to kill insects that might injure
or destroy the crop.

Nowhere in the article was there any indication that the author was
aware that without the bees there would be no crops! I think we are all at
least occasionally guilty of this kind of tunnel vision, of sighting in on our
target problem with such concentration that we don't see that others have a
concern with our problems and our solutions, and that their concerns must
also be addressed.

Our Society needs to draw membership and participation from all these
factions. Ideally our annual meeting should become a sounding board for
new ideas and approaches, the arena for dealing with conflicts, the meeting
place of old friends, the debut party for new entomologists in the state, and
the source of information on what's happening that affects our work. If all
of us work toward expanding and improving F.E.S., the Society can in turn
provide each of us with information and support which will enable us to do
a better job every day.

In closing, I just want to publicly offer a word of praise and appreciation
to all those members who have served this year on the executive board, as
editors of Florida Entomologist, or on committees. I hope that all members
are aware how much time and thought each of those serving gives to better-
ing the Society. And I would urge all of you who have not done so to fill in the committee choice sheet you received in the June mailout. The Society needs your involvement and you will enjoy and benefit from the association.