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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS 1977: THIRTY YEARS AND COUNTING¹

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During the early summer of 1947, some 100 lepidopterists, amateur and professional alike, received a mimeographed, 12-page document, dated May 1947 and entitled, *The Lepidopterists' News*. Across the top of the page, placed squarely beneath the masthead were the words in full capital letters—WELCOME TO CHARTER MEMBERSHIP IN THE LEPIDOPTERISTS' SOCIETY.

For this document and the promise of more to follow, we had each paid the magnificent sum of \$1.00 for a full year's subscription! Volume 1, number 1 contained 12 typewritten, mimeographed pages. The format set the tone for the remainder of the year's output. The first paragraph on page 1 presented a very clear picture of what was to follow:

"Here is the first number of the periodical announced in the March letter. The first few numbers, like this one, will each contain twelve mimeographed pages, and in this first issue are several of the regular features which are planned for your interest and enlightenment. On page 3 is the review of Ford's *Butterflies*, which will be followed regularly by reviews of other books of direct interest to lepidopterists. Pages 4-7 carry monthly notices of papers on Lepidoptera in the current literature. Page 8 contains the first of a series of brief biographies of important American and foreign Lepidopterists. Page 9 introduces a series of discussions on life history studies of Lepidoptera, concerned more with methods of study than with published papers and books. Pages 10-12 are devoted to collecting trips planned by members, your list of exchange notices and other requests, and miscellaneous items. We urge you to contribute items for these pages. In the serial subjects,

¹Read at the Annual Meeting of the Lepidopterists' Society in Boulder, Colorado on 24 July 1977.

such as on pages 3, 8 and 9, we expect to be able to present articles by authorities on specific phases of the subjects. The final issue of the year will be accompanied by a list of the names, addresses, and special interests of all members."

By the end of the year, the initial 101 members of May had grown to 220, the *News* page total had reached 117 and contained an incredible wealth of information, most of it as timely and interesting today as it was then. To determine how well the original concept has held up, one need only read our present-day *Journal* and *News*.

As most, if not all of you, are aware, the Lepidopterists' Society was initiated by Dr. Charles L. Remington, then a graduate student at Harvard. During the first few months of its life, the entire staff of the Society, editorial and administrative, consisted of three people: Charles Remington and Harry Clench, editors and Mrs. Jeanne Remington. In September of the first year, Harry Clench moved to Michigan and the entire work of publishing the *News* and conducting Society business was accomplished by the Remingtons.

In 1948, dues went from the original \$1.00 to \$2.00 in order to, as Charles Remington so aptly put it, "provide urgently needed typographical help for the enormous task of preparing the final copy of each *News* for the lithoprinter without reducing the size of the *News* volume." Some additional editorial help was added in the personages of Peter Bellinger, Dr. Diakonoff, C. F. dos Passos and Takashi Shirozu who assisted in examining the large number of scientific journals, and abstracting all papers on Lepidoptera to be included in the *News*. Total membership in the Society nearly doubled by the end of 1948 to 397. Volume 2 contained a total of 124 pages.

Thus did the Lepidopterists' Society and its publication, the *News* continue in almost the same format under the guidance of its primary founder until 1950. It had, however, become apparent for some time that the task of publishing the *News*, in addition to performing all other administrative functions was more than two could handle; some issues in late 1949 and most numbers in 1950 were combined and even then some appeared late. Early in 1950, Cyril F. dos Passos prepared a draft constitution and by-laws, and the president pro-tem, Dr. J. H. McDunnough appointed 3 temporary committees to prepare for the first annual meeting. At the meeting, held in New York on December 29-30, 1950, ballots previously mailed to all members were counted and the first full slate of officers in the Lepidopterists' Society were duly elected and took office. Just a little footnote of sadness to the above—in looking over the names of the officers, I note that only our first secre-

tary, Dr. Fred Rindge and our first elected treasurer, Dr. Ben Ziegler are still living.

In 1951, the *News* took on a different look with an attractive grey paper cover. The efforts of editors, Charles and Jeanne Remington, were assisted by associate editors, F. Martin Brown, Peter Bellinger and Eugene Munroe. Volume 5 contained 126 pages, plus a membership list of 15 pages. Total membership had reached nearly 500.

The year 1952 brought the first radical change in appearance to the *Lepidopterists' News*: volume 6 was, for the first time printed in type-set on a high grade, slick paper in the 6 by 9 inch format we are all familiar with in today's *Journal*. And, although it was not clearly stated, it had become obvious that the *News* was becoming a quarterly publication with 2 and sometimes as many as 3 numbers combined and mailed together in a single issue. Presentation of material and format remained essentially the same for the next 5 years. Elections of officers were held each year to fill vacancies as they occurred in the various offices as well as in the Executive Council. In 1955, with volume 9, dues for regular members, which had been raised to \$3.00 in 1952, were raised again to \$4.00 per year.

Volume 12 in 1958, although carrying the masthead of the *Lepidopterists' News* was the final issue to appear in the now familiar format and was, in fact, the precursor for our current *Journal*. Beginning with volume 10 in 1956, the membership list was already being mailed separately as a mimeographed list of sizeable proportions. Volume 12, issued in 3 parts of 2 numbers each, contained a total of 240 pages and set the model for the *Journal* that followed. The *News* as we know it today began publication at this time with Dr. J. W. Tilden as editor. This new *News*, economically mimeographed or multilithed, provided the vehicle for material of a temporary nature but of immediate interest; the *Journal* was a continuation of the old *News* with no major change in format, content, size or editors. Volume 13 in 1959 appeared for the first time with the masthead of *Journal of the Lepidopterists' Society*. Issued quarterly, it carried a total of 256 pages.

From 1960, when dues rose to \$5.00 per year for regular membership and then to \$6.00 the following year, publication costs remained relatively stable for the next 10 years. The cost of a Sustaining Membership, which, by the way, has always been one of the most beneficial ways of helping the Society financially, remained steady at \$15.00 for the 10 years between 1961-1971. Total membership remained within the 500-600 bracket for about 6 years, between 1952 and 1959. From

that time until the present, the Society has grown at the rate of a bit less than 10% per year.

But, enough of figures and statistics. For those who really wish to go into the statistical history of the Society in complete detail, I recommend a copy of our Commemorative Issue. And, on this subject, I come to the main point of this presentation. The Society has, in recent years, experienced increasing difficulty in finding qualified members willing to give of their time and talents in order that the Society might continue to function smoothly and efficiently. The Commemorative Issue, originally conceived to celebrate our 25th anniversary, has been 6 years in the works; we now hope to have it in the hands of individual members before the end of this, our 31st year! This is not meant as an indictment of those who have expended so much time and effort to see it published; on the contrary, I would hate to try to estimate the incredible number of hours and days Roy Kendall has put into this project. And he is but one of a number who have had a hand in its creation. I use the example of the Commemorative Issue to amplify the following point.

As President of the Society for the past year, I have, with the help of other council members, tried to find a successor for two of our most critically important officers, the Editor of the *Journal* and our Treasurer. We have written letters, made personal contacts and appeals, and otherwise have attempted by those limited means within our reach to find suitable and qualified personnel to fill these most critical positions. The 3-year terms of our Journal editor, Dr. George Godfrey, who has done such an outstanding job these past years and that of our Treasurer, Dr. John Snider, who has paid our bills and kept us solvent, will expire on 1 January 1978. At the time this was written, we had not been able to find interested and suitably qualified members willing to accept these positions.

The Lepidopterists' Society is now, and always has been, a non-profit organization. It has no salaried officers or employees, and all work is accomplished by members of the Society on a voluntary basis. My purpose in presenting the brief history of the growth of the Society was to illustrate that the *needs* of the Society also grew throughout the years, as did its size and the scope of its endeavors. These needs were not only monetary, as illustrated by the steady increase in dues from the original sum of \$1.00 to the current \$13.00; the Society, from its original 2-man operation has now an elected, functioning Executive Council or Staff, however you wish to call it, of 15 officers plus two separate editorial staffs, one for the *Journal* and one for the *News*.

As in most organizations, certain staff positions require more time and work than others, but all contribute their time and efforts without salary or remuneration of any sort.

A number of entomological societies have flourished in years past but have eventually disappeared. I do not know the detailed history of any of them, but I would make an educated guess that the most common cause of their demise was a lack of interest . . . a lack of interest by the membership at large in seeing to it that the organization survived those crises, fiscal or organizational, that occasionally arise in every society from time to time. Payment of dues and the money derived therefrom is vitally important for survival of any society of this sort; but no less so is the active and continued support of its members who give of their *time* as well as their money. A careful reading of Dr. Snider's fiscal report for the past 3 years indicates that we paid our bills, that our income exceeded our expenses by a reasonable and fair amount and that we have a comfortable, if not excessive, balance to our credit. Dr. Snider has declined, and rightfully so, to continue beyond his 3-year term of office.

It is with an audible sigh (Thank God) of relief, that I can now report to you that 2 days ago one of our members volunteered to have his name placed on the ballot for the coming year in the position of Treasurer, to serve for the next 3 years.

Just a few days ago I received a letter from an individual requesting information on membership in the Society. It was a very short letter and I will quote it in part:

"Dear Sir, I am writing to find if you are still associated with the Lepidopterists News/Journal. I would like to get membership but my letter to Sarasota, Florida was returned stamped unknown. I realize the issue I used is old, but I can't believe this paper has quit."

Ladies and gentlemen, I too, find it hard to believe that this 'paper' is even near quitting. I find it hard to believe that out of a total membership that must now be in the neighborhood of 1200 plus, there are not a number of individuals with talent, experience and, most of all, the desire to serve in order that the Lepidopterists' Society will survive. Even if the current crises were solved today (and I believe that they will be) I can foresee many similar difficulties in the future unless more members, particularly the younger and/or newer members of the Society find it also interesting and rewarding to serve with their time and talents in addition to just paying and receiving.

This message is designed to reach each and every member of the Society. Those of you here in Boulder listening to this, are, for the most

part, those who have and/or are serving the Society in many ways. To those of you who will read this . . . when a member of the Executive Council contacts you with a request for your help in whatever capacity it might be, please reconsider that initial urge to say, "No." Most of us find that 24 hours in one day, just aren't enough to accomplish all that we would like. So consider joining those who are in that same boat, for it is the busiest individual of all, who seems to find the time to add one more task to the growing list, and serve.

NOTES AND NEWS

Editorial Farewell

Three years ago the Society asked me if I would take the editorship of the *Journal*. I received such an impressive letter about my qualifications for the position that I felt compelled either to accept or tell the individual who wrote to me that he was a liar. I finally agreed to take the responsibility, hoping that if I did a respectable job we would both save face.

At the close of my term as your editor, I want to thank my associate editors, the reviewers, and other members of the Society plus several non-members who assisted and encouraged me during the past three years. Based on letters and comments that I have received, the *Journal* has remained the best publication solely devoted to Lepidoptera. The quality of the *Journal* is a reflection of those persons who have supported me. I especially want to single out William H. Allen for functioning as my technical editor in spite of his hectic schedule as a budding journalist. For the current volume I thank Paul H. Faber for providing the cover illustration of Abbott's Sphinx, *Sphecodina abbottii* (Swainson).

It is my pleasure to announce that Dr. Austin P. Platt will be the new editor effective 1 January 1978. More information about Dr. Platt will appear in the *NEWS*. I wish him the same cooperation and assistance that I received. Please see his special notice to contributing authors on page 274 of this issue.

George L. Godfrey



Nicolay, Stanley Swenson. 1977. "Presidential address 1977: thirty years and counting." *Journal of the Lepidopterists' Society* 31, 217-222.

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