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THE WILSON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Named after ALEXANDER WILSON, the first American Ornithologist.

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THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

When a society such as ours reaches its 100th year, it is inevitably a time of reflection—looking back at our history, anticipating our Centennial celebration in Philadelphia in June, and thinking about the future. Hence this resurrection of “The President’s Page,” an occasional feature of past issues of *The Wilson Bulletin*. In this instance I want to outline for our members the plans that are afoot for the next few months and to express some of our hopes for the future.

In 1988, the Wilson Ornithological Society will be chronicled by three past presidents, Jerry Jackson, George Hall, and Harold Mayfield, who are hard at work preparing a detailed history that we plan to distribute at the Centennial meeting as well as publish in *The Wilson Bulletin* for those who can’t make it to Philadelphia. These three gentlemen are digging deeply into our past, and their efforts should make fascinating reading. At the Utica meeting last spring we decided it would be as accurate and honest a history as they could make it, not just a eulogy of the society’s growth and triumphs over the years. Those, of course, will be included but the “warts” will be there, too.

The Centennial meeting will be held at Rosemont College in suburban Philadelphia. The officers and council wanted to have this historic meeting near Alexander Wilson’s “home town,” and Frank Gill was good enough to agree to host it. We appreciate Frank’s dedication to his field by running a second major meeting (he chaired the A.O.U. local committee in 1976). Most of us think that one per career is enough! The main meeting will be held on the Rosemont campus and should be affordable for most members. We particularly hope that we’ll have a fine turnout of students. We’re going to try to enhance the Wilson Prize—the award given for the best student paper at an annual meeting. And for the first time, the Society will subsidize banquet tickets for students competing for the prize—so the winner will be at the banquet to receive his or her congratulations (and check).

As planned by Jerry Jackson and the Centennial Committee, the Centennial meeting will be a day longer than past annual meetings, beginning on Wednesday night, June 8, and running through Sunday, June 12. Thursday and Saturday will be spent at Rosemont, for scientific paper sessions (arranged by Dick Banks and his committee), receptions, exhibits, morning field trips, banquet, etc., and on Sunday there will be day-long trips, still being planned at this writing. Friday, June 10, will be Centennial Day when the attendees will be taken by bus to the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, for a day of celebration. Frank Gill and his

committee are organizing an international symposium on the Paridae (chickadees, titmice, and allies), a particularly interesting and world-wide group of birds that has been studied intensively on both sides of the Atlantic. Distinguished speakers will conduct the symposium and workshops, and we will have other Centennial activities as well—special exhibits relating to the Society’s history and Alexander Wilson (his collection of specimens is at the Academy) and trips to parts of historic Philadelphia. In the evening we will have a gala celebration and then return to Rosemont. It should be a memorable day.

Afterwards begin our second 100 years. The Society undoubtedly will see changes—improvements in our journal and the other things we do. My particular concerns in thinking about the years to come are two-fold. The first is membership, keeping our numbers growing in pace with the increasing numbers of people concerned with the natural world, particularly birds, their study, and their conservation. The second is the financial capability to carry out the traditional goals of the Society, publishing a quality journal, supporting field-based research (particularly by the generations of young ornithologists to come), and contributing to avian conservation efforts. All of this takes money. Each year when the officers and council meet, the Society’s finances are discussed, dissected, and squeezed, to try to make each dollar go as far toward our goals as possible. But there is never enough to do all we want. I hope that in the next few years we can build our endowment so that the annual budget planning will not be the somewhat painful process it is now. We want to do more. Wilson members have proved that they can be generous when asked. Response to the Centennial Fund has been gratifying, so with future gifts and bequests we can go toward our bicentennial a stronger society.

MARY H. CLENCH