

THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

JULIAN L. DUSI

At the end of a second term of office, your President has gotten a good knowledge of the problems of the A. O. S. Through questionnaires, discussions with the members and trying to make the society function for two years, certain facts have come to mind many times. Rather than to let these be forgotten, I point them out by putting them on record here.

Your President feels that the A. O. S. has arrived at a crossroads situation. One road is to follow along the same route and remain a small, inconspicuous, malfunctioning club. The other road will lead to better organization, growth and to new heights of achievement.

The A. O. S. started on the first road and has for a long time been slowly approaching the crossroad. Its first Constitution and By-Laws were arrived at by copying the constitutions of neighboring "bird clubs," not following a recognized successful system of organization as given in Roberts Rules of Order. Your President was guilty of having helped organize the first Constitution. The revised present Constitution has only more befuddled the functioning of the present organization. Looking for a new "Messiah" hasn't solved the problems and won't because he will be beat before he starts. The turn to the right cannot be made until a completely reworked Constitution and By-Laws is drafted.

A. O. S. has been an autocracy for the greater part of its existence. This was partially necessary because of a small membership and few people who were willing to lend a hand. The membership has changed little. A few join each year and a few drop out. Many have dropped out because there has been little to interest them and no activity or job to do. Some of the offices of A. O. S. have functioned erratically because there was too much for one person to do. By the creation of a number of committees, the officers could be relieved of some stress and those members who need more activity could have a job to do. An editorial committee to help the Editor of Alabama Birdlife would be a big help and interesting work for several people. An editorial committee to write a monthly newsletter would be quite useful and solve a great interest problem. A membership committee to aid the

Treasurer send out membership cards, keep an up-to-date roster of members and to mail out dues statements, would be valuable. Several activities committees could function helpfully and do much to reduce the need of an autocracy.

The need for a President Elect is great. Only one of our Vice Presidents has been elected to the Presidency. Therefore the elected President has had little idea that he would be elected once or even twice. He could plan little in advance and knew little of the actual functioning of the society before he took office. A President Elect would have a year to plan a program and learn the intricacies of the society. Then he could immediately become an effective President and could carry out an effective program. He would serve more effectively because he would definitely know the length of his term of office.

The fiscal year has always been a problem and should be changed to begin on January 1. That way there would be no complications with memberships, dues and all that goes with our indefinite "year." Accompanying this fiscal year should be an annual business meeting dedicated to the business and elections of the society. Thus business would not be sandwiched into a busy spring or fall field meeting, but would be the main interest of the meeting.

Permanent records of the society are practically nil. The only records are a single set of notes recorded by the successive Secretaries. If this one set were lost we would have no records of past business and activities. Therefore, we need at least, duplicate records. Part of the records trouble is that A. O. S. has no permanent headquarters. If it had a permanent headquarters room or office, this would serve as a place where records could be permanently filed and back issues of Alabama Birdlife, newsletters and other records could be stored there. The least we can do, if this isn't attainable, is to microfilm our records and keep them in a safety deposit box, which the society could afford to rent. A secretarial records committee could certainly function to bring such records together and see that they are properly filed or filmed.

So goes the A. O. S. situation. It's a one-man organization now at a crossroads of no return. It can go on or take the turn to the right. What the membership **demand**s, it can do.