

THE SOUTHERN RESTORATIONIST

NEWSLETTER OF THE COASTAL PLAIN CHAPTER
OF SOCIETY FOR ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

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SUMMER OF 2003

2003 ANNUAL CHAPTER CONFERENCE

REPORT FROM THE MOUNTAINS TO THE SEA: RESTORATION IN THE SOUTH -Marti McGuire

Chapter members and fellow *southern restorationists* traveled “from the sea to the mountains” of northern Georgia to participate in the Annual Symposium and Membership Meeting of the Coastal Plain Chapter of SER. Whitehall Forest in Athens was a wonderful natural setting for the symposium held February 27-28, with the Flinchum’s Phoenix facility nestled amidst the oaks and hickories, overlooking the Oconee River. The presentations offered a wide array of restora-

tion ideas and examples from throughout the coastal plain region. Topics covered everything from fire management of Longleaf pine in the mountains of Alabama to a salt marsh restoration on the coast of Georgia.

Social events such as the evening poster session and impromptu gatherings at the local Athens watering holes fostered enlightening, and often entertaining, discussions regarding both the theory and practice of restoration amongst our region’s finest restorationists!

In addition to the excellent presentations, conference participants experienced restoration first-hand through a variety of field trips.

Research on the effects of understory recovery from seasonal burning was demonstrated at the Piedmont National Wildlife Refuge, exotic plant species control techniques were observed at the Rock and Shoals Outcrop Natural Area, and the Eller Seep Preserve in North Carolina offered the lowlanders a chance to see endangered pitcher plants in a rocky low mountain seepage bog.

The new officers and state representatives, elected during the membership meeting, will lead our chapter into the coming year and promote our chapter’s mission and goals. Be sure to read the Chapter Member Business section for all of the details!



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“Find your place on the planet. Dig in, and take responsibility from there.” - Gary Snyder

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

OK.....my “inaugural address,” I’ll try to keep this brief! First of all, I’d like to express my gratitude for allowing me to take the reigns of such a great organization. The Coastal Plain Chapter represents one of the most active restoration regions in SERI and certainly makes an incoming president feel like success is inevitable. Indeed, as I step into office the ball is rolling full steam ahead. Some examples: the updated chapter bylaws are in the final revisions stage, membership initiatives are underway, a list of academic programs that provide student training has

been compiled, the new chapter website has found a permanent home, and we have a committed communications committee publishing four chapter newsletters a year! This is just a short list that exemplifies the commitment of our members to chapter development.

Speaking of dedication, of all volunteer positions in the chapter perhaps the single largest commitment of time and effort falls upon the annual conference chairperson. The Coastal Plains Chapter has been incredibly fortunate to have the tireless dedication of Alison

McGee as the principle organizer of not one but the past TWO chapter meetings! For those of you who could not make it to Athens, the annual meeting was once again a huge success. Thank you Alison and conference committees for both Pensacola and Athens successes. I would also like to thank those of you that attended the 2003 chapter meeting in Athens. Attendance was a little low but enthusiasm was at an all time high! Finally, I am happy to report that the challenge of organizing our next meeting has been taken up by an equally energetic

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Catesby Lily

(*Lillium catesbaei*)

(Photo: Allen Burdett)

CHAPTER OFFICERS

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Morgan Varner (longleaf@ufl.edu)

RESTORATION PROJECT FEATURE

Florida Wetland Restoration Information Center



Florida, along with many other states, is experiencing the pressures of economic growth and the implications for the natural environment. In response, Florida has developed programs to protect and restore natural communities and wildlife throughout the state. "Florida is at the forefront of the nation's most progressive land protection efforts" (Florida Forever Five Year Plan 2002). Florida Forever seeks to preserve Florida's valuable ecosystems for future generations as identified in their statement "parcels of land must be acquired to facilitate ecosystem restoration" (Florida Forever Sec 259.105). Through this type of effort of land acquisition and other means of conservation, there is a movement to protect, restore and maintain the quality and natural functions of land, water, and wetland systems of the state. Several of the products of the Florida Wetland Restoration Information Center (FWRIC) compliment these goals by providing tools to comply with and assist in achieving such programs objectives.

With all the restoration taking place in this state, individuals conducting restoration gain significant amounts of experience and knowledge through their restoration practices. In order to learn from the successes and failures of practitioners, it is critical to document projects and share information. Even a seemingly small detail could be beneficial to others. Much of the

restoration community recognizes that a central repository, easily accessed and updated by the restoration community, can address these needs. FWRIC has developed just such an infrastructure to consolidate and share this valuable information.

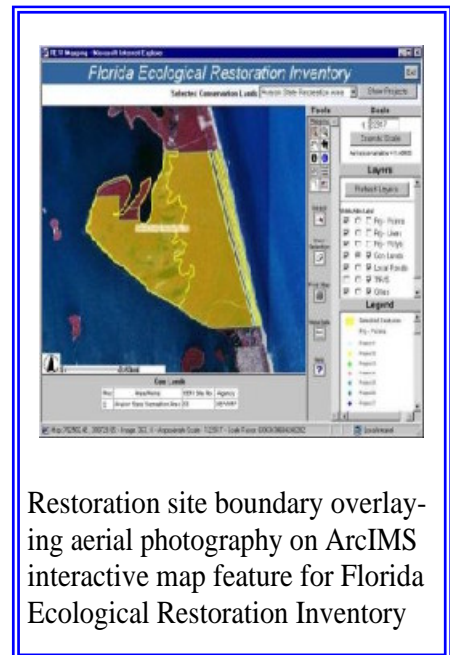
FWRIC is a web-based portal providing research tools easily accessible by all with internet access and may help individuals under time constraints. FWRIC products currently available online include the Florida Ecological Restoration Inventory, a searchable restoration funding database, restoration library of research links and a searchable bibliography. A handbook for restoration techniques and a review of restoration policy in the state of Florida are still being developed.

Land managers and landowners utilizing the Florida Ecological Restoration Inventory (FERI) increase the awareness of their projects as well as learn from others' experience through the database. FERI serves as a central knowledge database and facilitates communications amongst restoration practitioners. Originally piloted to track restoration needs on state lands, the inventory is growing to include restoration on all lands in the state. The inventory tracks project details such as the size of the project, the type natural community being restored, listed species bene-

fited, as well as a general site description. The database also tracks the site's estimated cost for restoration and its current status.

FERI also tracks restoration projects that are not yet implemented. Often there is a recognized need for restoration in a specific area, however there is not the monetary backing to create the plans for restoration or begin the process of restoring. The searchable aspect of FERI provides agencies and individuals looking to fund restoration with the ability to identify eligible projects. The inventory can be searched by project details or spatially through an ArcIMS interface to find restoration projects that meet their criteria. For example, individuals looking for restoration within a specific drainage basin or watershed can search

(continued on page 4)



Restoration site boundary overlaying aerial photography on ArcIMS interactive map feature for Florida Ecological Restoration Inventory

RESTORATION PROJECT FEATURE CONTINUED

the projects in FERI by this criteria. ArcIMS allows the user to see an interactive map of all the restoration projects listed in FERI. The maps show the spatial extent of the site, the locations of the specific work being done on site, as well as aerial photographs of the entire state.

This search capability can greatly benefit projects entered into FERI that still need partnering and funding. Projects can be easily submitted to the FERI database. Contact Richard.Butgereit@dep.state.fl.us for information on entering your project into FERI so that you and others can benefit. Compiling this information into a single source enables a broad distribution for both access and update capabilities, for public and private entities. Contributors can use a feedback mechanism to continually update current restoration projects and needs.

The Restoration library of the FWRIC includes a searchable bibliography of scientific literature relevant to restoration. The library also includes links to scientific journals, organizations and web links beneficial to restoration research. Contributions to both the bibliography and publication lists are welcomed and encouraged.

A searchable funding and incentive program database, containing programs applicable to wetland restoration in Florida, is another product available through the FWRIC web portal. Users are able to search for funding to restore their site with search options including eligibility, assistance type, and wetland type. Other agencies' efforts to pull together sources of funding for restoration are also listed in the Restoration Funding section of FWRIC.

The Restoration handbook is under development and will be available at the end of December, 2003. The handbook will survey techniques and look at restoration practices from case studies around the state. The handbook supplements the *Restoration Procedures Manual for Public Lands in Florida* by The Nature Conservancy, 1998. The handbook will illustrate current research and practices regarding restoration techniques for specific wetland types within Florida and general guidelines to follow when undertaking a restoration project. The handbook will cover how to assess the restoration site and determine appropriate restoration measures, as well as describe state of the science techniques used to restore various impacts. The

handbook will also provide direction to additional resources and professional assistance. The Society for Ecological Restoration International's Guidelines for Developing and Managing Ecological Restoration Projects will be used as a framework for this document.

A policy review is being conducted for Florida's statutes and existing programs which target improvement and restoration of wetland resources in the state. Key programs will be used as a basis for evaluation. A comparative search of other states' wetland programs will further provide a basis for recommendations. The FWRIC is collaborating with DEP wetland staff and other state agencies to evaluate program area shortcomings and strengths in order to establish a basis for making recommendations for improvement.

Please visit the Florida Wetland Restoration Information Center (<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/water/wetlands/fwric/>) and the tools it has to offer. Please consider contributing to the searchable Florida Ecological Restoration Inventory.



Search results for restoration site on FERI web page.

"If you are thinking one year ahead, sow seed.

If you are thinking 10 years ahead, plant a tree.

If you are thinking 100 years ahead, educate the people." -- Chinese proverb

CHAPTER OFFICER FEATURE

* Editor: This column features an introduction series of our Chapter Officers to all of us members. Enjoy.

Steve Schaff

President

Steve is a doctoral student at the University of Georgia's Institute of Ecology and is conducting his dissertation research at the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory in Aiken, SC. He grew up in western Nebraska and received a BS in Biology from Creighton University in Omaha, NE. He holds a MS in Biology from the University of Memphis where he re-

searched the factors controlling the success of black willow plantings used for stream-bank restoration. His current academic interests focus on the role species play in ecosystem function and in particular learning if species level information will allow us to design optimal establishment communities for ecological restoration. Steve has been a member of SER since 1997. In that time he has served as the student representative for the SER board of Directors retreat in 1999 and on the membership committee from

2001-present. As president he hopes the Coastal Plain Chapter will begin initiatives to bridge the gap between the science and practice of ecological restoration in the southeast, increase chapter membership and participation, and enhance recognition of the chapter throughout the region. Input, ideas, thoughts, concerns, etc. are welcomed: Steve Schaff, Savannah River Ecology Lab,

Drawer E, Aiken, SC 29802;
sschaff@uga.edu; (803)725-7283.

STUDENT MEMBERS NEWS

SER Student Members Making a Difference: *North Carolina*

Students play an important role in providing the science and know-how for ecological restoration. To recognize these efforts and to provide examples for new students of opportunities in restoration education and training, this column will showcase a few SER Coastal Plain student members. This column will highlight student members in North Carolina, with future issues on other regions.

Ross Andrews completed a M.S.

at North Carolina State University on restoration of a rare bottomland community, Non-riverine Wet Hardwood Forests at PCS Phosphate in Aurora, NC. His research focused on tree/shrub growth in two mine substrates and native topsoil. His current interest is community-based urban forest restoration.

Rebecca Vidra, a Ph.D. candidate at North Carolina State University, is interested in urban forest restoration. Her research focuses on enhancing the resistance of these forests to exotic species invasion. Re-

becca is also exploring the ethics of restoration research and will lead an ethics symposium at the next SER meeting.

Student members make up an integral part of our regional membership and restoration community. If you are a student and interested in SER's Coastal Plain chapter, contact me or attend an upcoming SER meeting.

- Morgan Varner

Student Representative

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STATE REPRESENTATIVES REPORTS

ALABAMA

- Dale Brockway

John Kush of the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences at Auburn University is continuing his research work on restoration of an old-growth longleaf pine ecosystem near Flomaton, AL. The previously heavy midstory has been reduced by thinning and fire has been reintroduced after a prolonged period of exclusion. It is hoped that the overstory trees can be protected and the understory ultimately transformed into one dominated by herbaceous plants with a good number of regenerating longleaf pine seedlings.

Dean Gjerstad of the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences at Auburn University and cochairperson of the Longleaf Alliance is organizing a conference tentatively set for October 2003 in Rome, Georgia focusing on Longleaf Pine in Mountain Habitats. The meeting will focus on fundamental biology, ecology, fire relationships, ecosystem restoration and management of public and private lands. Field tours to nearby longleaf pine sites in northern Georgia and Alabama are planned.

Ken Outcalt of the USDA Forest Service Southern Research Station in Athens, Georgia has been leading an ecological restoration study in southern Alabama at Auburn University's Solon Dixon Forestry Education center southwest of Andalusia. This study is part of a larger nationwide study, the Fire and Fire Surrogates Research Study. Ken's study is examining the impacts of prescribed fire, mechanical treatment and herbicide application and combinations thereof on the restoration of longleaf pine forests where fire has been long excluded. A number of research scientists from Auburn University (soils, wildlife) and the Forest Service's Southern Research Station (vegetation,

pathology, entomology) are collaborating with Ken on this operational scale study. The experimental treatments have been recently completed and interesting results will no doubt become available in the future.

Jim Miller of the USDA Forest Service Southern Research Station in Auburn has recently published "Nonnative Invasive Plants of Southern Forests: A Field Guide for Identification and Control." This field guide is part of Jim's continuing effort to focus attention of what some colleagues have dubbed "the slow motion explosion" of exotic species throughout the Southeast and the nation. The growing presence of these alien organisms has greatly degraded many native ecosystems and has, in fact, sometimes been a principal reason for undertaking certain ecological restoration efforts. As a leader in this field, Jim has traveled widely sharing his expertise with public land managers and private landowners and been actively involved in organizations seeking to effectively address the "invasives" issue.

The Oakmulgee District of the National Forests of Alabama hosted a field day early this spring for constituents interested in evaluating management alternatives proposed in the new forest plan. A major feature of the plan is restoration of longleaf pine bluestem forest ecosystems in the hill country west and south of Centreville. Several examples of healthy longleaf pine forests already exist in this area. Numerous off-site loblolly pine plantations currently under attack by pine beetles (or at risk for them) are prime candidates for restoration to longleaf pine forests. In the future, this landscape should have many more acres of restored longleaf pine, an achievement about which all Alabamians can be proud.

The Bankhead District of the National Forests of Alabama are planning to restore a number of ecosystem types

that have become less common in recent decades. These include restoring beetle-damaged loblolly pine plantations to either (1) longleaf pine bluestem ecosystems, (2) shortleaf pine bluestem ecosystems or (3) oak savannas, depending on appropriateness for a specific site type. Many areas in the north of Highway 278 will also be considered for development into oak-hickory hardwood forests (having few if any pines present). Ecological land types will serve as one of the major keys for determining the appropriate plant community "target" for each area. Re-creating "old-growth" forest is also a subject of some interest among constituents.



Gatorwalk

Photo: Allen Burdett

FLORIDA

- Randy Mejeur

Andy Clewell served as a speaker for the Univ. of Florida sponsored Natural Resources Field Day program entitled "Longleaf Pine: Ecology, Management, and Restoration" on June 3 in Milton, Florida. **Mike Renda** has been involved with a project on a barrier island in southeast Florida that involves exotic species removal and native species planting to restore

STATE REPRESENTATIVES REPORTS CONTINUED

(continued on page 7) tropical hammock, oak hammock, coastal strand, mangrove swamp, and dune systems in association with the Nature Conservancy. Florida SER members **Erica Hernandez** and **Marti McGuire** have been working on the Florida Wetland Restoration Information Center web site, which can be viewed at <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/water/wetlands/fwric>. The web site serves as a clearinghouse for information about wetland restoration throughout the state of Florida, including a database of wetland restoration projects throughout the state, links to restoration literature sources, and restoration funding sources. **Nancy Bissett** is currently involved in several restoration projects throughout Central Florida, including a 200 acre sandhill restoration in the Green Swamp and restoration efforts in flatwoods, sandhills, and prairies on the Reedy Creek Mitigation Bank. In addition, she is in the process of a research project studying the efficacy of imazameth (Plateau) as a pre-emergent herbicide for newly seeded wiregrass systems. **Bruce Tabor** (btabor@helios.acomp.usf.edu) recently completed his B.S. in Environmental Science from the University of South Florida and is currently searching for job opportunities.

Audubon of Florida administers the Florida Keys Environmental Restoration Trust Fund, which has funded 26 separate restoration projects on public lands within the Florida Keys such as the restoration of upland hammock and saltmarsh/mangrove wetlands for the Carysfort project and wetland restoration on the Port Bougainville project. The purpose of the Fund on its funded projects is accomplished through scrape-down of filled wetlands, refilling of artificial canals and channels, removal and management of invasive non-native vegetation, and purchase of fee title or easements where significant restoration is possi-

ble. For more information, contact Florida SER member **Mark Kraus** at mkraus@audobon.org.

The Tavernier Science Center was established in the Florida Keys in 1938, where the Center has performed a wide array of research and recovery projects over the years on many organisms of ecological significance in Florida Bay and the Florida Keys. Today, the center continues its role as a leader in ecological research with a variety of projects important to Everglades restoration, migratory birds, and reef fish populations. The Center is in need of a Florida Keys Policy Associate that would draw upon the resources of the Center to produce technical comments and position papers on projects and issues affecting the Keys, including the analysis of CERP and other restoration projects that have tremendous impacts on the limited resources of the Keys. For more information, contact Florida SER member **Mark Kraus** at mkraus@audubon.org.

Several Florida members, including **Fred Sklar**, are involved in the implementation of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). Additional information about components and current status of the CERP can be found by contacting the South Florida

Water Management District (West Palm Beach), the Army Corps of Engineers (Jacksonville), or www.Evergladesplan.org.

LOUISIANA

- Bob Keeland

Bob Keeland of the USGS National Wetlands Research Center in Lafayette Louisiana has been working on studies of the success of reforestation efforts in bottomland hardwood forests of the Lower Mississippi Valley. Key elements of the studies have been an examination of the effects of direction and distance to the nearest forest fragment on levels of natural invasion by woody species onto former agricultural fields. Observed patterns include the almost lack of invasion by very heavy seeded species (such as oaks and pecans), very high invasion rates for wind dispersed species within about 200 m of the forest fragments, moderate invasion by smaller heavy-seeded species (such as sugarberry which can be dispersed by small birds) out to about 450 m and limited dispersal of some woody species as far out as 1,000 m from the nearest fragment.



Fieldtrip at 2003 Annual Coastal Plain SER Chapter Conference
Photo: Marti McGuire

CALENDAR OF RESTORATION EVENTS

<u>2003</u>	<u>EVENT NAME/TYPE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>CONTACT</u>
June 28- July 2	American Water Resources Association Annual Conference	Jacksonville, FL	American Water Resources Association
July 9 - 11	Florida Local Environmental Resource Agencies Annual Conference	Jupiter, FL	FLERA
July 9 - 11	Creation and Restoration of Wetlands	Olentangy River Wetland Research Park, OH	The Olentangy River Wetland Research Park
July 11 - 12	Advanced Wetland Delineation	Charleston, SC	Duncan & Duncan Wetland and Endangered Species Training (D&D W.E.S.T.)
July 23 - 25	Interagency Consultation for Endangered Species	Charleston, SC	Duncan & Duncan
August 3 - 8	Ecological Society of America's 88th Annual Meeting	Savannah, GA	Ecological Society of America
Aug 18 - 21	Basic Wetland Delineation	Charleston, SC	Duncan & Duncan
Aug 18	West Coast Working Group/Land Mgt Monitoring Workshop	Port Charlotte, FL	Laura Digruccolo, Charlotte Co. Parks & Rec., (941) 624-0387
Aug 25 - 28	Wetland Delineation & Management Training	Charlotte, NC (& other areas)	Richard Chinn Environmental Training, Inc.
September 11 - 12	Identification of Wetland Grasses, Sedges and Rushes	Gainesville, FL	Institute for Wetland & Environmental Education & Research
Sep 12 - 13	Hydrophytic Vegetation - Coastal Region	Charleston, SC	Duncan & Duncan
Sep 22 - 25	Wetland Delineation & Management Training	Tampa, FL (& other areas)	Richard Chinn Environmental Training, Inc.
November	15th Annual International SER Conference	Austin, TX	SER

ANNUAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Plans are currently being made for the 2004 SER Coastal Plain Chapter meeting. We have tentatively selected the Raleigh, North Carolina area for next year's conference and are now searching for the best site. The schedule will be the same as last year's conference in Athens, 2 days of symposia and 1 day of field trips. Please be on the lookout for

more information in the coming months on our website. If you are interested in presenting papers or posters please contact Carol Helton Denhof, Conference Chair, at cdenof@atlantabotanicalgarden.org or (404) 591-1719.



Fieldtrip at 2003 Annual Chapter Conference

Photo: Marti McGuire

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CONTINUED

member. Carol Helton Denhof has graciously accepted the task, and has already begun moving forward! The breadth of systems, experiences, and projects across our seven state region is impressive. We look forward to the 2004 meeting to once again exchange ideas, accomplishments and shortcom-

ings.

Lastly, I would like to encourage our membership to share this newsletter with your colleagues. As always, we want our chapter to grow and we think the efforts by our communications committee to publish a high quality newsletter will highlight the Coastal Plain Chapter

as the premier restoration organization in the southeastern United States.

Until next time..... "Either get busy restoring, or get busy dying!" (adapted from

The Shawshank Redemption)

SPECIAL FEATURE CONFERENCE REPORT

Ecosystem Restoration & Stewardship Conference, 4th Agro-Ecology Conference, St. Augustine, Florida, January 15-17, 2003

- Dave Borland

Conference attendees and presenters represented a broad spectrum of practitioners of ecological restoration. This point was well exemplified by the plenary speakers.

Andy Clewell (A.F.Clewell, Inc.) emphasized the technical perspective that has demonstrated the potential restoration of all Florida ecosystems. For example, SERI Primer & Guidelines will increase quality of restoration and success and will assure mitigation quality & regulatory education. Reasons for restoration include natural ecosystem services and natural capital factors.

Don Ross (Earth Balance, Inc) emphasized the business perspective that is providing the industry potential and resources to respond to the local, as well as global, restoration demands. The determinants for this

response were identified as local demand for quality mitigation & regulatory standards, support industry to provide knowledge and resources, and competition to stimulate innovation. Some risks to maintaining this response are not having a broad based demand model, being able to innovate rapidly and over specification of "methods" & under specify "results".

Reed Noss (Univ. of Central Florida) emphasized the ecological perspective that provides an ability to restore endangered ecosystems. He discussed the increase in the quality of ecological restoration and conservation planning from the joining of disciplines of Conservation Biology & Ecological Restoration and the restoration of regionally important geographic areas as the network of protected functional ecosystems. He suggested that society must assign the ethics and values to represent all ecosystems across all variations, maintain viable populations, sustain ecosystem processes and build conservation network that is adaptable to changing environments.

"Savannas are magnificent wildflower gardens. Something is always blooming grass pink orchids, rose pogonia, rosebud orchids, ladies' tresses. In the heat of the summer the fringed orchids are torches through the meadows. Blue-eyed and yellow eyed grass, white eyed sedge. Meadow beauties. Fall brings on the composites, purple spires of liatris, also called blazing star, brown rayless sunflowers, goldenrod, bigelowia and coreopsis. The aster balduina pools like orange juice in the wettest places and clumps of pearl-tipped hatpins stick the carpet of forbs to the flat earth. White violets hover low."

-Excerpt from Janisse Ray's "Ecology of a Cracker Childhood"

**COASTAL PLAIN CHAPTER
OF SOCIETY FOR ECOLOGICAL
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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

*F*ellow Southern Restorationists, in the glow of our successful 2003 Annual Chapter Conference, there have been many positive changes to report. First, the Communications Committee has been invigorated with the addition of Erica Hernandez and Marti McGuire. Their talents are very evident in the quality of our newsletter. By the way, please notice that our humble newsletter finally has an official name—appropriately it is the “Southern Restorationist”. The winning name selected at the 2003 Conference was contributed by Dale Brockway who will be receiving the \$75 gift certificate! Also we hope that you enjoy the column with the state rep-

resentatives reports. It is our hope that in the next issue we will have all the states reporting. Every member can make this a reality by responding to your representative’s request for input!

We have a new website! - thanks to the outstanding assistance of Pat Outcalt and Dmitry Paladino. Here you will find the abstracts from the 2003 Chapter Conference and minutes of Chapter meetings, as well as your portal to fellow chapter members.

Second, we have the fresh energy of our new president and officers. We are very fortunate to have such a committed membership that

steps up to the challenge of leading our collective restoration efforts. And along with this change of the guard, we would like to state our heartfelt thanks and remember all the retiring officers:

Beth Wertschnig = President

Alison McGee = Conference Committee Chair

Tiffany Gann = Membership Committee Chair

Carlen Emanuel = AL Rep

Ken McLeod = SC Rep

Ted Shear = Webmaster

Jobs Well Done!!!

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