

# **NEWSLETTER**

## **NORTH AMERICAN SECTION, IUSSI**

### **SPRING/SUMMER 1998**

#### **PRESIDENT'S LETTER**

Greetings from your President.

This has been a novel year in the post of NAS/IUSSI president. It has proven more time consuming than I anticipated, but is still the figurehead office, with most of the real work of the Section falling on Bob Vander Meer's shoulders, and I thank him again for his service.

I was forced into premature Presidency by Penny Kukuk's new duties as Program Director for Animal Behavior at NSF, which precluded official roles for in the IUSSI/NAS, to avoid any apparent conflicts of interest.

Our successful meeting in Nederland, Colorado in September had a number of contrasts with our usual meeting venue of the ESA national convention. It was much smaller (not in terms of IUSSI participants, but overall), much more intense (with a single session so that nearly everyone heard all of the presentations and saw all of the posters), much more in touch with the environment (it rained and snowed most of the time we were there), and much less expensive. It also had a somewhat different composition: attendance by student members was very high, and attendance by USDA personnel was rather low. The consensus of those attending was that it was very worthwhile for our Section to meet separately from time to time, specifically every four years, on the mid point of the International Congress cycle (i.e. 2000, 2004, etc., if we can project that far into our future). We are indebted to Mike Breed and his students for doing the work to realize our first independent meeting as a section.

The Section has had a web site since December, assembled and coded by Jennifer Fewell and myself. The URL for this site is <http://lsvl.la.asu.edu/iussi/>. I hope members have and will continue to find this a useful resource. The newsletters will be available on this site (in fact they should get there before you receive them by email or regular mail), and it provides other resources including links to other sites, and a directory of those members who have requested to be listed.

The Section also had a strong presence in its usual annual venue of the ESA national meeting in December. (It was held in the planet of Opryland outside of Nashville. It was an interesting site, but after being held hostage to their exploitation of their isolation for a few days, I would not choose to return). The symposium we put forward, arranged by Karen Strickler and Jim Cane was the first choice of nearly all the Section C officers and camp followers, and will be on the program for the Las Vegas ESA national meeting. In addition an informal conference honoring Roger Morse and his contributions to honey bee science is being organized by Tom Seeley and Gene Robinson.

Finally, this is an exciting year for the Section as we prepare to attend the International Congress in Adelaide, Australia at the end of the year. On behalf of the Section, I applied to NSF for travel funds to support mostly student members' travel to these meetings. (Thanks to Gene Robinson and Sydney Cameron whose proposal for the India meeting was largely recycled, yet again.) We were awarded much less than we received for the India meetings (for which foreign currency funds were available), and the same amount we received for the Paris meeting. However, the travel to Australia is much more expensive than it was to Paris, so the award was disappointing, though it will make it possible for some members who could not have otherwise attended to get to Australia.

I have enjoyed serving the IUSSI, but look forward to passing the gavel to Jennifer Fewell in Las Vegas. I hope to see many of you there and in Adelaide.

### **MINUTES OF THE 1997 NORTH AMERICAN SECTION (IUSSI) BUSINESS MEETING (Nederland)**

Date: September 20, 1997 President: Penny Kukuk

Secretary-Treasurer: Bob Vander Meer

Location: Oxygen deficient Campsite

The meeting was called to order by President Penny Kukuk at approximately 5:45.

President Kukuk welcomed IUSSI members and guests. The minutes from the North American Section meeting in New Orleans, December 1995, were approved by the membership (without me having to read them first). It was made clear that this year the NAS would have two business meetings - here and at the normal venue, the ESA meeting in Nashville. I gave the Secretary-Treasurer's report. Basically the NAS appears to be in excellent financial condition. Income was \$6,526.59 and expenses \$5,996.62 to leave our account with about \$10,500. A final and complete report appears in this Newsletter. I pointed out that the three newsletters cost over \$700.00 last year and that this would be pertinent later in the meeting when a NAS web site was discussed. The Insectes Sociaux subscription rates have not been increased by Birkhauser; therefore, the subscription rates remain the same as last year. A detailed financial report for 1997 follows the minutes.

I pointed out that our membership was very responsive to the call for renewals. Thirty members renewed twice for 1996 and one renewed three times in six months. I guess our membership fits well in to the absent minded professor cliché. We have 6 family members, 106 regular members, and 24 student members. It is heartening to see so many student members! The membership was asked to encourage their students to join the society. We had 54 regular member subscriptions and 9 student subscribers.

On behalf of the Nominating Committee, Steve Rissing announced that Gene Robinson and Jennifer Fewell were nominees for President Elect. Nominees were asked for from the floor; however, no additional nominees were forthcoming. The nominating Committee is normally

composed of the two most recent past presidents and an elected member, e.g. This year the members were Steve Rissing, Barbara Thorne, and elected member, James Cane. Next year the committee would be composed of Barbara Thorne, Penny Kukuk, and an elected member, but Penny Kukuk is unable to serve because she is currently on a special assignment at NSF (NSF does not allow formal participation in professional functions to avoid any perception of conflict of interest). So, after discussion we decided to elect two members to join Barbara Thorne as the 1998 Nominating Committee. One elected member would come from here and the other elected from the ESA Nashville business meeting. Result: Jim Hunt nominated Chris DeHeer and the membership elected him as a new member of the Nominating Committee.

The call for nominees for the 1997 George C. Eickwort, Student Research Award was announced in the Spring 1997 Newsletter. Gard Otis, one of the Award committee members, announced that the response, thus far, was paltry and asked for renewed effort from Graduate Student advisors to get application materials in for their qualified students to one of the committee members. The other committee members are James Tranielo and Theresa Singer (see the announcement for the 1998 George C. Eickwort, Student Research Award in this issue).

Bob Jeanne, an Associate Editor of *Insectes Sociaux*, gave a report on the status of the journal. The Journal has decided to publish invited review articles. The editors have generated a list of potential authors, but the membership is welcome to make suggestions. The editors are trying to find someone to write a Memorial for Bill Brown. Several names were offered from the floor, e.g. Bill Gotwald, Ted Schultz, Phil Ward, Barry Bolton, Ed Wilson, Bob Taylor...Keep your eyes open for the end result.

The Journal has a 48% acceptance rate and ca an 8 to 9 month time period from submission to publication. The publisher, Birkhauser and Editor-in-Chief, Johan Billen, are concerned about the decreasing Impact Factor (IF) of *Insectes Sociaux*. It is currently 0.33, down from 0.642 in 1994 (for comparison, *Science* = 22.1; *BES* = 1.85; *J. Insect Physiol.* = 1.46; *J. Insect Behavior* = 0.88; *Fl Entomol.* = 0.39). The IF is the number of times papers in a journal are cited during the previous two years divided by the number of journal articles published by that journal in those two years. Incorporation of review articles is an effort to increase the number of citations. There was discussion from the floor. Walter Tschinkel suggested that IF was not applicable to *Insectes Sociaux*, because it is a small specialized Journal and therefore has a citation disadvantage. Joan Strassman said that we (the membership) must deliberately cite *Insectes Sociaux* articles more often. In fact, Joan said she could probably raise *Insectes Sociaux*'s IF herself (go to it Joan!!). David Queller said that reviews should help and that the Journal has gotten much better in the last few years, which does not jive with the decrease in IF. Bottom line - support our Journal by citing its articles whenever possible.

A report on efforts to develop an NAS/IUSSI web site was given by Kirk Visscher. He and Jennifer Fewell will combine forces and energy to get the job done by the ESA meeting in December, 1997. See the special report from Kirk Visscher on our web site in this issue.

The Election Committee was charged with the task of investigating how other small professional societies handle the election process. It had been expressed that the way we do it - two candidates ensures that there is a loser. Our membership is not large and nobody likes to lose. Is

there a better way to do it? Joan Strassman commented that she thought the election process was the best way to go and that she had lost twice and did not have any negative reaction. She also suggested e-mail voting. I commented that last year we made available all methods of communicating your vote, snail-mail, FAX, e-mail, and still had low participation. The following choices were presented to the floor for vote: A) Only one nominee; B) one nominee and write-in possibilities; C) two nominees; D) two nominees. A discussion ensued about the merits of each, then the issue went to a vote. The winner was C) two nominees - maintaining the status quo. Democracy in action. See Ed Vargo's detailed report - this issue.

Leeanne Alonso spoke for a few minutes about the Xerces Society. The Society is involved in the conservation of invertebrates. Leeanne had informational brochures and membership application forms. She is currently, Coordinator of Conservation Science with The Xerces Society and can be contacted at 6210 Julian Street, Springfield, VA 22150, Tel/fax: 703-644-4836; Email: lalonso@sprintmail.com. Gard Otis commented about the Apimondia meeting in Canada, which typically draws 2,500 to 8,000 attendees. This meeting provides an interface between those doing research and beekeepers. See detailed report - this issue, or contact Gard at gotis@evhort.uoguelph.ca, for more information.

Jennifer Fewell commented on the fact that The Animal Behavior Society is extremely enthusiastic about interacting with our group. Jennifer suggests that we think about a possible joint Symposium in 1999 when their meeting will be held in Mexico, perhaps something dealing with pheromones. Also, Jennifer suggested that we consider directing some manuscripts to Animal Behavior. Joan Strassman commented that she has experienced difficulty in getting social insect papers through Animal Behavior. What has been the experience of other NAS/IUSSI members???

On behalf of the NAS/IUSSI Penny Kukuk gave a big thanks to Mike Breed for organizing this highly successful meeting. Mike said 87 people attended the meeting and that he did not consider it a tough job (Mike is very modest, or super efficient, or a great delegator, or all of the above). There followed a discussion of the pros and cons of this meeting and what to do next. The comments ran like this: excellent - brought together a wider range of researcher, since some do not normally attend the ESA meeting. The ESA meeting is better for students because of the employment opportunities and the greater number of disciplines and areas represented. May not be good for Faculty jobs but is great for postdocs or Grad students who want to make a change. - Four years is too long to wait for another meeting like this. -Liked the intimacy of a smaller meeting (I got to know my stove real well) and would like 2 year intervals. -Must recognize that some people will go to the ESA meeting and not be able to or not want to come to this kind of meeting. -Other IUSSI sections have their own meetings so our association with the ESA is not obligatory. - The next normal cycle for this meeting would be in 3 years. This was put to a vote and was passed. Various people made location suggestions, e.g. Sidney Cameron - Fayetteville, AR; Marla Spivak - Minnesota Research Station; Steve Rissing - Tucson. The number of volunteers is indicative of the enthusiasm generated by this meeting.

Penny Kukuk passed the gavel to Kirk Visscher. Kirk talked briefly about the NSF travel grant that has been applied for. The question was asked about matching funds. Jim Hunt said that for the Munich meeting he spent all the funds. Based on current funds we put \$5,000 in matching

funds to the vote. It passed. Regarding travel to the Adelaide meeting - Kirk is looking into group rates. NSF requires an American carrier; however, code-sharing will work. We may want to combining efforts with the Hymenopterist Society, which will have its meeting after the IUSSI meeting. Penny was thanked for her efforts as president and it was clearly time to get the beer out of the frig. Meeting adjourned.

## **MINUTES OF THE 1997 NORTH AMERICAN SECTION (IUSSI) BUSINESS MEETING (Nashville)**

Date: December 16, 1997

President: Kirk Visscher

Secretary-Treasurer: Bob Vander Meer

Location: Nashville - Bubble Envirotron

The meeting was called to order by President Kirk Visscher at 7:15pm on 12/16/97. Old business was discussed, e.g. The Nederland meeting was deemed a great success and the decision was made to do it again. Election procedures will remain the same. The temporary changes in the nominating committee, due to Penny Kukukâs involvement with the NSF were discussed and the third member, Jim McKiver was nominated and elected by the membership. End result: the Nominating Committee is - Barbara Thorne, Chris DeHeer, and Jim McKiver.

Symposia for next year's ESA meeting were discussed. Karen Strickland and Jim Cane proposed an informal conference - "What Direction Pollination?". Anita Collins and Gene Robinson proposed an informal conference to honor Roger Morse. These informal conferences were unanimously endorsed by the membership.

The 1997 George C. Eickwort, Student Research Award was presented to Chris DeHeer, who has been working with Ken Ross at the University of Georgia. Chris has done some outstanding work using molecular biology techniques to sort out and genetically define polygyne and monogyne fire ant populations. A very nice award certificate (produced by Bob Jeanne), subscription to *Insectes Sociaux*, and a check are included in the Award. Congratulations Chris!!

Chris Starr, our NAS Archivist, put forth a motion to create an International IUSSI Archive. The motion was discussed and the membership voted to present the idea before the governing council at the International IUSSI meeting in Adelaide, next year. Jennifer Fewell and Kirk Visscher did a great job in getting our web site up and running. The address is <http://lsvl.la.asu.edu/iussi/>. There is still much to do, for example, what links do we want to create, do we want e-mail addresses on the page, etc. Please feel free to contact either of them with comments and/or suggestions.

Kirk Visscher reported that the NSF Adelaide travel Grant Proposal was submitted and that NAS will provide \$5,000 in matching funds. I gave a brief report on our finances and membership statistics, very similar to those outlined above for the Nederland meeting. Sanford Porter

announced that an updated version of the extensive ant database is now available. If you are interested please contact Sanford at sporter@gainesville.usda.ufl.edu. Anita Collins reminded everyone that next year's ESA meeting is earlier than usual - November 8 12, 1998. Therefore, all deadlines will be about one month early. The meeting was formally adjourned, but informally continued with our after business meeting party.

Signed: Robert K. Vander Meer

## 1997 SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENT

CATEGORY DESCRIPTION 01/01/97 THROUGH 12/31/97

INCOME TYPE	AMOUNT
Family Member	9.00
Gifts Received	70.00
Interest	127.59
Membership	1,755.00
Student Membership	217.00
Student Subscriptions	552.00
Subscriptions	3,796.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>6,526.59</b>

EXPENSES	AMOUNT
Newsletter	492.36
Postage	272.10
Refreshments	131.16
Subscriptions and Capitation	4,851.00
Student Award	300.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>5,996.62</b>

NET INCOME/(LOSS) 530.97

BALANCE FORWARD NAS/IUSSI 9,958.43

OVERALL TOTAL 10,488.40

## **Grants for Travel Assistance!**

International Union for the Study of Social Insects International Congress, Adelaide, Australia  
December 29, 1998 to January 4, 1999

Limited funds (awarded by the United States National Science Foundation and the IUSI North American Section) are available to assist travel of North American scientists to attend the IUSI Congress in Adelaide. Preference will be given to graduate students and recent Ph.D. 'socials. Up to US\$ 1,500.00 per traveler will be awarded. Applicants should send a brief CV, an abstract of the paper or poster to be presented in Adelaide, information about other funding available, and plans, if any, for research-related activities before or after the meeting. Grants will be made to those applicants selected by a committee of the IUSI/NAS in accord with guidelines from the funding sources. Selection of applicants will begin July 6th, 1998, applications received after that will be considered if funds remain available. Email applications are preferred, and can be sent either as ASCII text in the body of the email or as attached files readable by Microsoft Word (v.6).

P. Kirk Visscher, Phone: (909) 787-3973 President, North American Section IUSI Fax: (909) 787-3086 Department of Entomology Edress: Visscher@mail.ucr.edu University of California, Riverside 92521

Check out the IUSI Congress web page for the latest information!  
[www.bio.flinders.edu.au:80/iussi/](http://www.bio.flinders.edu.au:80/iussi/)

## **New Social Insect Book!!!**

"Pheromone Communication in Social Insects"

Bob Vander Meer, Mike Breed, Karl Espelie and Mark Winston (eds) Westview Press 5500 Central Ave, Boulder CO 80301-2877 Tel: 303-444-3541; FAX 303-449-3356 ISBN: 0-8133-89763

The royalties from the book will go to the Eickwort Student Award Fund, so the NAS/IUSI benefits from each purchase!! Contact the publisher. Price = \$79.00. FLASH: In its first three months the royalties have amounted to \$671.76 - not too bad.

## **GEORGE C. EICKWORT, STUDENT RESEARCH AWARD**

CALL FOR 1997 NOMINEES Deadline: October 15, 1998

Purpose: To recognize research by graduate students in the field of social insect biology for work done in North America or by a student member of IUSI/NAS pursuing studies elsewhere.  
Nature: The award shall consist of a certificate, an honorarium (amount to be determined by Executive Committee) and one year subscription to *Insectes Sociaux*. The award will be presented at the annual IUSI/NAS business meeting.

**Eligibility:** The award will be given to the student(social), who in the opinion of the judging committee, shows the most distinguished record of research and scholarly activity in the area of social insect biology. Any student doing work in North America or any student member of IUSSI/NAS may be nominated. The student shall not have received a PhD or terminated studies earlier than 12 months prior to the award. Students continuing beyond a baccalaureate or masters degree will remain eligible. Previous award recipients are not eligible for a second award.

**Nominations:** Nominations may be made by the student or by others familiar with his or her work. Each nomination must be typed (double-spaced) and include: name and curriculum vitae of the student nominee; title and brief (not to exceed one page) description of the work; reprints of up to two publications; submitted manuscripts or a thesis/dissertation; and at least two letter of recommendation. The proposal and supporting information, three copies of each, must be sent to the Chair of the IUSSI/NAS Student Award Committee by October 1. A biographical sketch should be included.

**Student Award Committee:** The Student Award Committee shall consist of three members, serving staggered terms of three years. A new member shall be elected each year at the annual business meeting of IUSSI/NAS. The senior member shall serve as chair of the committee. Members shall be from separate institutions. Consideration should be given to representation from a diversity of social insect taxonomic groups, and research specialties when electing the new member.

**Committee Charge:** The Award Committee shall be responsible for (1) soliciting and ranking nominations and selecting the awardee, (2) notifying the awardee, and (3) announcing the award at the annual business meeting and in the section newsletter. Attendance at the business meeting by the awardee is encouraged but not required.

**Judging:** The Award Committee members shall independently review nominations and rank them. Priority shall be given to proposal demonstrating originality and good scientific methodology in the field of interest. The Award Committee chair will summarize the results and discuss them with the other judges as needed to reach a consensus. The judges' decision will be reached prior to the NAS/IUSSI business meeting held in conjunction with the annual ESA meeting.

The Committee Members:

James Tranielo Gard Otis, Chair  
Theresa L. Singer  
Department of Biology Dept. Environmental  
Biology Department of Entomology Boston University University of Guelph University of  
Georgia 5 Cummington St. Guelph, Ontario CANADA Athens, Georgia 30602 Boston, MA  
02215 (519) 824-4120 ext. 2478 (706) 542-2816 leave message Tele: 617-353-2832 (519) 837-  
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singer@bugs.ent.uga.edu

### **Winner of the 1997 George C. Eickwort Student Research Award**

Our congratulations go to Chris Deheer and to the other nominees, who demonstrated excellent qualifications and made the committee's decision difficult. This year the Eickwort Award Committee had no one to evaluate, until less than a month ago when we received the nominations of three outstanding candidates that were virtually impossible to separate and rank because each one had such a strong record of excellence. In the end, after much deliberation, a very difficult decision was made. The recipient of the 1997 Eickwort Award is Christopher



DeHeer of the Department of Entomology of the University of Georgia. Chris began his academic education at the University of Delaware, receiving a Bachelor's Degree in Entomology, summa cum laude. At Delaware Chris also began his research career, working with Doug Tallamy on insect mating systems and insect/plant interactions. In 1991, Chris began his dissertation program at the University of Georgia, carrying with him an NSF Graduate Fellowship. Since then he has worked in Ken Ross' lab on questions involving kin discrimination in polygyne fire ants and alternative reproductive tactics in monogyne fire ants, the latter project being a collaboration with Walter Tschinkel. The results of Chris' research have been highly acclaimed and have either been published or are in press in the prestigious journals Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology, and Behavioral Ecology. Chris' work has important implications for understanding kin discrimination and the maintenance of polygyny in ants and its effects on population biology. In addition to his commitment to research, Chris has been extremely active in community outreach programs and in his role as Vice-President of the Lund Club, has made presentations to grade-school children and has organized the annual Insect Zoo for four years. Congratulations again Chris.

## **NAS/IUSSI Elections Committee Report**

Committee members: Mike Haverty, Barbara Thorne, Ed Vargo

Our current elections process requires electing a President-Elect each year and a Secretary-Treasurer and Archivist every three years. The Nominating Committee, consisting of the two most recent past presidents and an at-large member, nominate two candidates for each office to be filled. Elections are then held by mail during the fall. Over the years, some members have expressed a concern that having elections with two candidates per office pits accomplished members of our small society against each other and results in half the candidates being rejected by their closest peers. This may have the effect of limiting our pool of potential officers, because once (or twice or more) rejected, members may be understandably unwilling to run for office in future elections. While having more than one candidate run for each office offers a choice to our members, the low voter participation, usually <25% of the membership, suggests that most members are apathetic; many have mentioned that both candidates are well-qualified. To explore alternatives to our current elections process, we surveyed other scientific societies to see how they handled their elections. During the fall of 1997, 11 entomological societies ranging in membership >from 38 to 2,000 or more were surveyed. Member participation in elections ranged from 10-40%. The process of selecting officers was fairly uniform, generally consisting of a nominating committee whose members were appointed by either the past or current president. The number of candidates selected for each office ranged from 1 to 2 or more, with 4 societies generally selecting only a

single candidate per office and 2 societies stacking the deck by deliberately selecting 1 strong and 1 weak candidate for each office.

Committee Recommendations:

1. The committee suggested the membership change our elections process such that the Nominating Committee selects a single candidate for each position. This would have required

changing from "two candidates" to "at least one candidate" Article VI of our Constitution which currently reads, "The Committee shall solicit by mail from the membership proposals for nominations for each office to be filled, nominate two candidates for each office, ascertaining whether proposed nominees will accept office if elected." This change would have provided the flexibility to return to having more than a single candidate run for each office in the future without having to re-amend the Constitution.

2. The committee also suggested the membership charge the Nominating Committee with attempting to rotate the presidency among the various subgroups comprising our society, so that over time the different social insect groups would be equally represented as well as the different types of labs (academic, government, applied). In the opinion of the committee, this action would have helped to increase membership and strengthen our society.

The Vote: A vote was taken at the Nederland meeting to change our Constitution as described in Recommendation 1 above. It was defeated. Thus the Constitution and our process of selecting candidates will remain unchanged. No action was taken on Recommendation 2.

## **BRAZIL : A message about the International Congress of Entomology**

Dear Entomologist

June will be your last chance to submit symposia for the XXI ICE. We still have some opportunities on most of the sessions. If you have a suggestion, pls call moscardi@cnpso.embrapa.br. But, do not forget to go first to <http://www.embrapa.br/ice> and check the rules for symposia.

Decio Luiz Gazzoni President, XXI ICE

PS. Start thinking about plenary lectures for next July.

## **Insectes Sociaux Submissions**

To Increase or Not to Increase That Was/Is the Question!

Input From Insectes Sociaux Subscribers

Johan Billen, the editor of Insectes Sociaux, has been receiving a large number of submissions for publication in the journal. He has begun negotiations with the publisher, Birkhauser, to expand the number of articles published each year by about 20%. This would relieve some of the pressure on the journal and would improve publication opportunities for our members. However, publishing more articles would increase the cost of the journal; at present the contemplated price increase would be about 20%. Current journal subscribers were asked how they felt about the proposed increase in papers and cost. The results of this e-mailing to are as follows:

Strongly Support: 8 Moderately Support: 14 Support: 4 Neutral: 2 Oppose: 0 Moderately Oppose: 3 Strongly Oppose: 0

Comments:

Pros: Greater Number of pubs should increase the citation rate and Impact Factor. This is a major outlet for social insect paper, so as the field expands so should the journal.

Cons: Concerned about a decrease in standards; more articles may dilute and make worse the citation problem; increase in price will decrease the current subscriber base, especially students; the journal already is expensive!; must not allow quality to drop; rigor and quality must be maintained

Suggestions/Questions: Split journal; Move to a non-profit publisher; defray the increased cost of pages with an increase in the page charges; how do other publishers handle this kind of situation?; Why expand? Just become more selective to raise the paper quality and there are plenty of other journals for social insect papers. Is there a way to increase pubs but not the journal cost? Increase subs most for regular members, less for libraries, less yet for students.

The survey results were sent to Mike Breed and forwarded to Johan Billen.