



NORTH AMERICAN SECTION

NAS/IUSSI NEWSLETTER



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SPRING/SUMMER 1999

Greetings!

As this year's president, I get to write the "presidential" letter, perhaps one of the most challenging duties of the office! As usual, I must acknowledge the work of the Secretary-Treasurer, who really does everything to keep the society running. Bob Vander Meer has done a great job for the past three years, and is still helping to keep things running smoothly. Bob has passed the torch on to Ed Vargo, who is already doing a great job, for example by emailing me repeatedly to write this letter (although he *did* fall asleep in the general assembly of the Australia meeting).

We had two meetings in quick succession this past year, the Entomological Society in Las Vegas, and the International Meeting of the IUSSI in Australia. The minutes for the business meetings for both are in the newsletter. Two major items of note are that the next international meeting will be held in Japan, and that changes have been made to the editorial board of *Insectes Sociaux*.

This second item is of importance to us. The argument was made that the health of the journal requires periodic turnover in the editorial staff. Consequently most of the board and the editorial staff were replaced. The original goal was a complete turnover in all people serving over four years, including our own Bob Jeanne. This announcement was made in the executive committee meeting, and took the NAS representatives by surprise. Needless to say, we objected. The announcement was particularly ironic, given that the NAS members had just given a unanimous vote of support to Bob in the section meeting. I should note that Bob also has the support of the editorial board, including the enthusiastic endorsement of Professor Billen. Over beer and discussion it was agreed that Bob should continue as associate editor until the Japan congress. However, at that time (barring other circumstances) we should have a replacement in mind. The quality of *Insectes Sociaux* has improved over recent years, with a current rejection rate of about 50%. More submitted manuscripts come from the NAS than from any other section. Thus, it is important that we continue to have a good associate editor from our section.

Other than this moment of peril, the Australia meeting was wonderfully dynamic. In fact, it was exhausting to have so many interesting talks to choose from. I forget over the years between meetings what it is like to get to interact intensely with so many people interested in the same things I am (or doing a good job of pretending to be!). Although we get to interact with our fellow social insect people at the Entomological Society meetings, we are diluted by the vast number of people in different areas than our own. Additionally the meeting sites (often tourist attractions) are not conducive to focusing on the intellectual exchange that meetings are really for. I think that every four years is too long to wait for the inspiration and

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Ed Vargo ed_vargo@ncsu.edu; Tel.: 919-513-2743; FAX: 919-515-7746

synergy that happens at the international meetings. However, I think we gained a similar energy at the first NAS meeting in Nederland. I hope that we can put together another such meeting in the next two years. Although we have some preliminary ideas, we still do not have a confirmed site or organizing committee. I think we need to make this a priority.

Well, that's all the presidential news. Don't forget to check our website at <http://lsvl.la.asu.edu/iussi/>. I look forward to seeing you at the Atlanta meeting, and passing the gavel on to Joan Herbers. Congratulations Joan!

Jennifer

Minutes of the 1998 NAS/IUSSI Business

Date:	November 10, 1998
President:	Kirk Visscher
Secretary-Treasurer:	Ed Vargo standing in for Bob Vander Meer
Location:	Neon light capitol of the world

1. President, Kirk Visscher called the meeting to order.
2. The winner of this year's Eickwort Award was announced: Phil Starks, a Ph.D. student in the Section of Neurobiology and Behavior at Cornell University working with Kern Reeve and Tom Seeley.
3. Kirk informed us that the NSF/NAS/IUSSI travel awards had been issued and will help support 20 students to attend the Adelaide Congress.
4. There was discussion of whether the Eickwort Award, currently given every year, should instead be offered every other year. The small number of nominations received annually was the main reason cited for consideration of the change. However, it was generally agreed that it was better to give the award each year.
5. Steve Rissing was selected to replace James Traniello, who will be on sabbatical, on the Eickwort Award Committee.
6. With 36 members voting, Joan Herbers was announced as the new President-Elect.
7. Ed Vargo was announced as the new Secretary/Treasurer to begin a 3-year term on Jan. 1, 1999.
8. There was discussion concerning whether we should continue to send the newsletter by regular mail, or whether it should be available electronically and mailed only to those who specifically request it. There was some concern about how ballots would be handled. No decision was reached, so for the time being the newsletter will be mailed out and will also be available at the NAS/IUSSI web site.
9. Treasurer's Report was given for Bob Vander Meer by Kirk Visscher. The royalties for the book "Pheromone Communication in Social Insects" edited by Bob Vander Meer, Mike Breed,

Karl Espelie and Mark Winston have amounted to \$1,173.74, which has been placed in the Eickwort Student Award Fund. It was reported that the NAS/IUSSI currently has a net balance of \$11,185.73, a \$700 increase over last year's balance. However, this does not reflect our Adelaide Travel Grant Contribution of \$5,000.

10. Membership Report: For the 1998 year we had 4 family members, 117 regular members and 23 student members. Of the regular members, 47 are also subscribers to *Insectes Sociaux*. There are 7 student subscribers.

11. ESA Symposia: Anita Collins announced that the following title had been proposed as a Section Cb Symposium for next year's ESA meeting in Atlanta: "Sperm storage in insects: morphology, physiology and alternatives," co-organized by Anita. At Mark Winston's suggestion, Nick Calderone and Chris DeHeer volunteered to propose a Program Symposium titled "The Insect Societies - 100 Years of Contributions to Ecology, Evolution and Behavior." In fact Nick, Chris and other co-conspirators got so carried away with this great idea, they were proposing a 2-part symposium, with Part 2 held as a Section Symposium or an Informal Conference (but see below).

12. There was discussion of the NAS/IUSSI web site and it was suggested that the URL be changed to something easier to remember.

13. With the Adelaide Congress approaching, the issue of what matters or concerns of the NAS/IUSSI should be brought up at the Congress was raised. The only issue raised was to look into establishing a union-wide web site. Also, it was mentioned that at Adelaide it will be decided where the next International Congress will be held. Traditionally, there has been at least one proposal by members of the NAS/IUSSI to host the meeting. Although it has been some time since it was last held in the North America (Boulder, 1982), there were no proposals made to host the next meeting in our section.

14. Finally, Francis Ratnieks, the Secretary of the British Section of the IUSSI was in attendance. He suggested that we work to increase awareness of the impact of social insect research on biology by reaching out and extending contacts to people working in related fields. He also mentioned several future activities of the British Section that will be of interest to members of the NAS/IUSSI. A complete list of events is given on the web page of the British Section (<http://www.angus.co.uk/iussi/>), which is also linked to the NAS/IUSSI web page.

Minutes of NAS/IUSSI Business Meeting at the IUSSI Congress

Date:	January 2, 1999
President:	Jennifer Fewell
Secretary-Treasurer:	Ed Vargo
Location:	Land downunder

On word from Johan Billen that there would be a proposal at the International Committee Meeting to rotate out all of the editorial positions for *Insectes Sociaux*, including Bob Jeanne's position as Associate Editor, we passed a motion to encourage Bob to renew his term. Because Bob was not there to dissent, the motion passed unanimously.

Bob Vander Meer gave a short Treasurer's report. After seeing how full the coffers were, Sanford Porter requested assistance of \$300-\$500 every two years to help cover the costs of updating FORMIS, the ant literature database. The motion carried.

Minutes of the IUSSI International Committee Meeting

Date: January 2, 1999
President: Ross Crozier
Secretary General: Mike Breed
Location: Even further downunder

Due to a protracted session of Thai food and Red Ant beer before the meeting, the details are a bit sketchy. There was a report on Congress finances. Johan Billen gave a lengthy account of the status of *Insectes Sociaux*, which among other things has changed to a two-column format, allowing 20% more characters per page. Johan has done an excellent job improving the quality of *Insectes Sociaux* and he deserves much praise for his efforts.

A motion was made to replace the Editorial Board of *Insectes Sociaux*. The new members will be appointed on a rotating basis to a fixed term, rather than the indefinite term of the previous members. Johan Billen noted that Luc Passera's term as Associate Editor had expired. Motions were passed to appoint Manfred Kaib to replace Luc and to renew Bob Jeanne's term.

Two proposals were made to host the 2002 Congress. The German Section made a pitch to hold the meeting in Berlin. The Japanese Section proposed to have the meeting in Sapporo. Sapporo was selected as the next Congress site.

Robin Crewe announced plans to form an African Section of IUSSI. Bylaws have already been drafted in both French and English.

A motion was introduced and passed unanimously to award Charles Michener the first Honorary Member of IUSSI.

Michener Awarded First IUSSI Honorary Member

During the Congress Assembly, our own Charles Michener was given the distinction as the first Honorary Member of IUSSI. He was presented with the original painting, Honey Ant Dreaming by Boomanualla Wirrajim, a very handsome painting in aboriginal motif that served as one of the official Congress designs.

Treasurer's Report

I know everyone's dying to know, so here's the status of our books for the 1998 calendar year.

Category	Amount
Inflows	
Opening Balance	\$10,489.40
Membership dues	
Regular	1,905.00
Family	20.00
Student	182.00
Subscriptions	
Regular	4,453.00
Student	414.00
Meeting Surplus	624.25
Total Inflows	18,087.65
Outflows	
IUSSI International (Capitation fees and subscriptions)	4,883.75
Newsletter	322.24
Postage	302.38
Office Supplies	6.35
Eickwort Award	300.00
Total outflows	5,814.72
Remaining Balance	12,272.93

Ed Vargo, Secretary-Treasurer

Social Insects to Take Center Stage at Next ESA Meeting

Dear Colleagues,

We are pleased to announce that Professor E. O. Wilson will give the Plenary talk at the upcoming ESA meeting in Atlanta, Georgia on December 12-16, 1999. In addition, we have put together a Program Symposium - *The Insect Societies - 100 Years of Contributions to the Biological Sciences* - that is tentatively scheduled for Monday morning, December 13th, 1999. Below, you will find the information on the symposium that we have provided to ESA.

Theme:

Because of the many similarities to human societies, the social insects have fascinated philosophers and biologists alike since the earliest times. During the last hundred years, this fascination has inspired numerous groundbreaking discoveries affecting many, if not all, of the biological disciplines. Darwin had feared that the social insects would be the undoing of his theory of evolution by natural selection. So, there is considerable irony in the fact that the social insects were so pivotal to W. D. Hamilton's unified theory of natural selection - kin selection. Studies on social insects have advanced or given birth to other disciplines in biology as well. Von Frisch's studies on the honey bee dance language opened the door to

animal communication, and W. C. Rothenbuhler provided the first demonstration of the link between genes and behavior, again using the honey bee as his model organism. These discoveries contributed to the foundations of three modern scientific disciplines: evolutionary biology, animal communication, and behavior genetics. Given the continued use of social insects as model systems in these and other disciplines, we believe they will continue to play a key role in the development of many important areas of research. In today's symposium, we have selected prominent themes from the study of insect societies that we believe have been, and will continue to be, instrumental to the study of biology.

The Insect Societies – 100 Years of Contributions to the Biological Sciences

INTRODUCTION – 5 min

1. Bert Hölldobler
University of Würzburg
Ants as Model Systems for the Study of Animal Communication
2. Michael D. Breed
University of Colorado, Boulder
Kin Recognition in Social Insects: A Century (and more) of Contributions to Social Biology
3. Robert E. Page, Jr.
University of California, Davis
From Genes to Behavior

4. Andrew Bourke
Institute of Zoology
Zoological Society of London
Social Insect Studies: Impact on the Theories of Kin Selection and Sex Allocation
5. Gene E. Robinson
University of Illinois
Regulation of Behavioral Development in Honey Bees: From Society to Genes
6. Thomas D. Seeley
Cornell University
Social Insects: Exemplars of One of the Major Transitions in Evolution

BREAK – 10 min

SUMMARY

Respectfully,

Nicholas W. Calderone
Department of Entomology
Cornell University

Chris DeHeer
Department of Biology
Colorado State University

Eickwort Award Winner

Last year's Eickwort Award winner is Phil Starks, a Ph.D. student in the Section of Neurobiology and Behavior at Cornell University working with Kern Reeve and Tom Seeley. Congratulations to Phil!

What's my Status?

You will notice some strange hieroglyphics next to your name on the mail label of this newsletter. In an effort to keep you up-to-date on your membership and *Insectes Sociaux* subscription status, in brackets are two numbers separated by a comma. The first number shows the latest year for which we have a record of receiving membership dues. The second number is the most recent year for which we have received payment for a subscription to *Insectes Sociaux*. A “-“ indicates no current record for either category. I've gone back in the records to 1997. If your membership space shows a “-“, then we have not received your dues since at least 1996. If you are in this category, you risk being removed from the membership list. Please check your status and notify Ed Vargo if you feel it is in error.

We plan to update our membership list on our website. You will notice a box on the attached membership renewal form indicating your wish **not** to list your email address on the website. Please check this box only if you prefer **not** to have your email address published on our website.

5th International Colloquium on Social Insects

The Russian Language Section of the International Union for the Study of Social Insects announces its 5th Colloquium which will cover all aspects of biology, ecology, behavior, faunistics, diversity, conservation, rearing and use of social and presocial arthropods, termites, cockroaches ants, wasps bees, bumble bees and others. It will be international (as it successfully was with 4th Colloquium in St. Petersburg), and colleagues from abroad are warmly invited to attend the Colloquium and to take the opportunity to see Moscow. The Colloquium is supposed to be joined with the 3rd International Conference for Ecology and Conservation of Apidae in Moscow.

The official languages will be English and Russian. Registration fee will be US \$150 before July 1, US \$175 after July 1, 1999. Accommodation is expected not to exceed US \$50/night. If you intend to participate, please send us brief information (see below) no later than April 1. E-mail is preferable for communication. Any ideas about getting additional financial support for the Colloquium will be appreciated.

Contact: Dr. Valdimir M. Kartsev, Colloquium Secretary
 Department of Entomology
 Faculty of Biology
 Moscow State University
 119899 Moscow RUSSIA
 Tel. (+7) 095 939 16 95
 bmv@shmel.transit.ru

Ed Vargo
Department of Entomology
Campus Box 7613
North Carolina State University
Raleigh, NC 27695-7613
U.S.A.