



NAS/IUSSI NEWSLETTER

December 17, 2007



NAS/IUSSI

2007 fall newsletter

Officers

President: Bob Vander Meer
President-elect: Marla Spivak
Past President: David Queller

Secretary-Treasurer: Stan Schneider
Archivist: Chris Starr

Nominating
Committee Diana Wheeler
Gene Robinson
Charles Whitfield *at large*

Eickwort Student
Award Committee: Phil Starks (Chair)
Kenna MacKenzie
Bryan Danforth

Dear NAS members:

This newsletter will be my final act as Secretary-Treasurer for the NAS-IUSSI. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve the NAS for the past three years. I think we have a wonderful organization and it was a pleasure working with you.

Our new Secretary-Treasurer is Colin Brent (csbrent@hotmail.com). After December 31, 2007, please direct all correspondence to him. In particular, please send your **2008 membership form** to Colin at:

Colin S. Brent
Research Entomologist
Arid-Land Agricultural Research Center
21881 North Cardon Lane
Maricopa, Arizona 85239
520-316-6330 (FAX)
colin.brent@ars.usda.gov

Thanks again and I hope everyone has a happy holiday season. *Stan*



**Minutes of the NAS-IUSSI Business Meeting
San Diego, CA
December 11, 2007**

Officers:

Attendance: ≈65

Chair: Bob Vander Meer
President-elect: Marla Spivak
Secretary-Treasurer: Stan Schneider

Call to order: 7:35 PM, by Bob Vander Meer

President's message (Bob Vander Meer: "The intricate fire ant alarm pheromone")

I. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- **Results of NAS elections:**
 - 2007 President-elect: Marla Spivak**
 - 2008 President-elect: Blaine Cole**
 - 2008-2010 Secretary-Treasurer: Colin Brent**

Congratulations to Marla, Blaine and Colin, and many thanks to the members of the Nominating Committee (Diana Wheeler, Gene Robinson, Charlie Whitfield) for their help.

- **PLEASE NOTE:** Beginning in 2008, the NAS-IUSSI will no longer handle subscriptions to *Insectes Sociaux*. The publisher, Birkhauser will take over direct handling of all subscriptions from individuals. With the new arrangement, Sections will no longer have any responsibilities for collecting subscriptions, handling money, negotiating complaints, etc.
Birkhauser will soon communicate directly with subscribers concerning renewals for 2008. This change will be reflected in the 2008 NAS membership form, which will be distributed shortly after the 2007 business meeting. Gratis subscriptions will continue to be provided to the Editorial Board as at present. If you have questions, please contact Birkhauser directly at petra.stromberger@birkhauser.ch
- **Update on the 2008 Breakout Meeting, Mata de Plátano Field Station, Puerto Rico.** Bert Rivera-Marchand gave a brief presentation for the upcoming meeting; lodging will consist primarily of tents and the total cost per person for the entire meeting should be about \$150.00; U.S. currency is accepted in Puerto Rico and passports are not required. A webpage for the meeting site and a call for papers will be available in early January, or contact Tugurl Giray (tgiray2@yahoo.com)

- **2007 George C. Eickwort Student Research Award: presented to Alexander Mikheyev by Kenna MacKenzie (Alexander was unable to attend the meeting)**

This award is given in memory of George Eickwort and is designed to recognize exceptional research and scholarly activity by students in the field of social insect biology. The award consists of a certificate, an honorarium, and a one-year subscription to *Insectes Sociaux*. This year's Selection Committee consisted of Phil Starks, Bryan Danforth and myself (Kenna MacKenzie). Many thanks to Bryan and Phil for their assistance this year.

As always, the quality of the nominees for the Eickwort Student Award was outstanding. The committee had a very difficult time choosing a single recipient. If it were allowed, we would have given two awards this year – it was just that close between the two top nominees. Thus, we would like to recognize a runner-up. Amy Toth, PhD (2006), University of Illinois studied physiological and genomic bases of division of labor in honey bees and paper wasps in Gene Robinson's laboratory. One of her references described her as "an outstanding young scientist of extraordinary accomplishment and promise", and we certainly agree.

The North American Section of the International Union for the Study of Social Insects is proud to announce that **Alexander Mikheyev, University of Texas** was selected as the recipient of the **2007 Eickwort Student Award**. Alexander has carried out research in both field and laboratory, and has the ability to combine ideas from very different research areas (invasive species, biogeography, population genetics, biodiversity) into interesting and ground-breaking theory and experimentation.

Alexander (Sasha) Mikheyev is a student of Ulrich Mueller at the University of Texas in Austin. His PhD research examined attine ant-fungus mutualism. As a result of this work, the long held belief of coevolutionary specificity in ant/fungus interactions was overturned and a new paradigm, that of "many-to-one coevolution" was developed. He has received numerous awards during his graduate studies including a Liebmann Fellowship, a University of Copenhagen Fellowship, and an EPA STAR Fellowship (2004-2006). Alexander is a very productive young scientist. In addition to the four papers from his dissertation, he has already published nine papers (four as first author). As well he received a Fullbright Fellowship (2006-2007) to study the impact of *Wasmannia auropunctata*, an invasive ant species, on biodiversity in Africa – research totally independent of his PhD studies. The following statement from one of his references perhaps best sums up his qualities "Sasha is not only one of the most gifted social-insect researchers I know, but is overall probably the most versatile scientist I have ever worked with". Alexander is currently finishing up his dissertation while teaching a full course in Evolution at Southwestern University as an adjunct instructor. The Award Committee is very pleased to announce that Alexander Mikheyev is the recipient of the 2007 Eickwort Student Award.

Congratulations Sasha! And, many thanks to Kenna, Bryan and Phil for their hard work.

- **2007 William L. and Ruth D. Nutting Award: Presented to Matthew Tarver by Kenna MacKenzie**

This award is named in honor of the late Bill Nutting, an outstanding termite biologist who made major contributions to termite biology, both through his own research and mentoring of students, and in honor of Ruth Nutting for her support of Bill's work. It is given to the NAS/IUSSI student member who shows the most distinguished record of research in the area of basic termite biology. The award consists of a plaque and a research grant of \$1,000. This year's Selection Committee consisted of Michael Haverty, Ed Vargo, Ruth Nutting and myself (Kenna MacKenzie).

There were outstanding nominees for the Nutting Award again this year. However, one individual stood out. The North American Section of the International Union for the Study of Social Insects is proud to announce that **Matthew Tarver** was selected as the recipient of the **2007 William L. and Ruth D. Nutting Award**. Matthew's research focuses on termite caste differentiation using a wide range of

physiological, biochemical and molecular tools. He has six (three as first author) research publications in excellent journals and has demonstrated outreach to the scientific, pest control industry and greater entomological community.

Matthew Tarver is a student of Michael Scharf at the University of Florida in Gainesville. His PhD research is investigating socio-environmental, hormonal and molecular factors that interact to regulate caste differentiation in *Reticulitermes*. His research in basic termite biology, particularly identification of genes, should lead to new novel termiticides. His reference writes of Matthew "a gifted young scientist in that he displays a high level of creativity and a unique ability to synthesize basic questions with relevant applied outcomes". For these reasons, the Award Committee is very pleased to announce that Matthew Tarver is the recipient of the 2007 William L. and Ruth D. Nutting Award.

Congratulations Matthew! And, many thanks to Mike, Ed, Ruth and Kenna for their help.

II. TREASURER'S REPORT: presented by Stan Schneider

INFLOWS	
Membership Dues	\$6385.00
Donations	311.00
Revenue from 2006 IUSI Congress	4998.00
TOTAL INFLOWS	\$11,694.00
OUTFLOWS	
IUSI International (Capitation fees and subscriptions)	5182.00
Award plaque (2006 Nutting Award)	61.00
Refunds to members	119.00
TOTAL OUTFLOWS	\$5362.00
Net Income/Loss	\$6332.00
Balance Forward	\$1033.00
REMAINING BALANCE	\$ 7365.00

2007 Memberships		2006 Memberships		
Total Regular members:	107	Total Regular members:	141	-24%
with subscription:	41	with subscription:	51	
without subscription:	66	without subscription:	90	
Total Student members:	21	Total Student members:	76	-72%
with subscription:	2	with subscription:	11	
without subscription:	19	without subscription:	65	
Household members:	4	Household members:	5	
TOTALS	132	TOTALS	222	-41%

- Stan reported that he spoke with Chris Leonard at Morgan Stanley (who handles our Nutting Award Fund) about ways we might invest some of the NAS funds to generate additional money for student travel awards for the 2010 IUSI Congress in Copenhagen. Given the relatively small amount we have and the brief period available for investment before the Congress, our best bet would be for the Secretary-Treasurer to invest in a CD with an expected return of 4-5%. Discussions will continue.

- Membership forms will be distributed with the minutes of the 2007 business meeting in late December. 2008 Membership dues will be \$22.50 for regular members; \$9 for students.
- Please note that starting in 2008, the NAS-IUSSI will no longer handle subscriptions to *Insectes Sociaux*. The publisher, Birkhauser will take over direct handling of all subscriptions from individuals. With the new arrangement, Sections will no longer have any responsibilities for collecting subscriptions, handling money, negotiating complaints, etc. This change will be reflected in the 2008 NAS membership form. Gratis subscriptions will continue to be provided to the Editorial Board as at present. If you have questions, please contact Birkhauser directly at: petra.stromberger@birkhauser.ch
- **Update on the Nutting Award Fund:** presented by Mike Haverty: As of Oct. 31, 2007, we have a total of \$22,156 in the account, which generated \$1121 in revenue. Kenna MacKenzie suggested that on odd years the Nutting Award should be opened to post-docs and new faculty. The newly created Student Awards Committee (see below) will look into this possibility.

III. OLD BUSINESS

The Executive Committee presented the following seconded motion for consideration:

A Standing Committee on Awards shall be called the "Awards Committee". It will be composed of three members, one of whom acts as chair, appointed by the Executive Committee whose term will not exceed six years. The Executive Committee will appoint new committee members to replace those that reach the end of their term or resign prior to the end of their term. The Awards Committee will oversee the execution of the Eickwort Award, Nutting Award, and Student Competition Award (to be given in alternate years at the Breakout Meeting). The duties of the committee shall include preparation and distribution of the call for nominations to the membership through the NAS Secretary, recruitment of judges or ad hoc reviewers, and announcement of award winners in the NAS newsletter and at appropriate meetings.

The motion was amended to read "...one of whom acts as chair, appointed by the Executive Committee for a three year, renewal term, not to exceed a maximum of six years."

Sean O'Donnell expressed concerns that the structure of the recruitment and review processes was too vague, although it was pointed out that this information is typically included in the calls for nominations. Justin Schmidt asked if the different members should have staggered terms. The renewable term of the chair should help to ensure continuity.

Motion passed: 26 yes; 0 no

III. NEW BUSINESS

- IUSSI proposed financial plan: Stan Schneider gave a brief synopsis of the proposed plan to address the \$15,000 deficit of the IUSSI by increasing capitation fees. Page charges for publishing in *Insectes Sociaux* will not be instigated. A fiscal report from the Secretary General, Joan Herbers, will appear in the first issue of 2008 for *Insectes Sociaux*.
- The NAS members were asked to provide input on the proposed statutes for the IUSSI (distributed in an earlier newsletter). Please send comments to Colin Brent (csbrent@hotmail.com)
- Mike Breed provided a brief update on the status of the Social Insect Network in the ESA. Mike and Gene Robinson have filed the necessary paperwork and we are now registered as a

Network, although the procedures for how the Network will operate within the ESA are unclear. The social insect Network and the NAS-IUSSI can be the same and we are now situated to propose symposia for the ESA meetings.

- The President, Bob Vander Meer, initiated a discussion of extending the term of the NAS President to two years, to provide better institutional memory for the organization. **By a vote of 19 to 8, the membership charged the Executive Committee with exploring the idea and report back at the 2008 Business Meeting.**

Bob Vander Meer presented Stan Schneider with a plaque in appreciation for his work as Secretary-Treasurer. (Thank you!)

Bob passed the gavel to Marla Spivak, 2008 NAS President

Meeting Adjourned: 9 pm

Minutes submitted by Stan Schneider