



# ***NAS/IUSSI NEWSLETTER September 20, 2010***



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## **NAS/IUSSI Officers**

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President:	John Wenzel	Secretary-Treasurer:	Colin Brent
President-elect:	Terry McGlynn	Web Master:	Colin Brent
Past President:	Blaine Cole	Archivist:	Chris Starr

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Dear NAS members:

Copenhagen, a beautiful and historic coastal city and an epicenter of European culture became the hub of the social insect world for a week this August. Great minds came together to share ideas and to reshape the course and structure of our society during the XVII quadrennial congress. New collaborations were formed and major breakthroughs revealed. New foods were tried, spirits were imbibed in centuries old pubs and merry social gatherings lasted late into the night. Rather than immersing myself in this enriching environment, I spent my week in Maricopa, AZ which is a dusty, acultural armpit of a backward thinking state, and I got to enjoy the peak of miserable summer weather. My only social interaction consisted of talking to a new neighbor whose political and social perspective made me cringe and has led to a strict policy of avoidance. I was not happy, and I am mortified to admit that I took out my frustration on the local fireants in a series of brutal strikes. Sure, they did start things by invading my bathroom and kitchen, and rendering sections of my yard into a no-man's land, but the reprisal wasn't commensurate with the offense. Although I won the war, it was a hollow victory. Readily available poisons made the battle too easy, whereas I needed a struggle that was sufficiently epic in scope to distract me from my misery. Luckily, a dust storm blew in halfway through the week and the resultant algal bloom in my pool and a failed pump tasked me to my limit. Who needs a conference in a charming locale when you can work with caustic chemicals and steel brushes to subdue microscopic autotrophs that are running amok? Throw in a little sunburn and dehydration and an outrageously high repair bill for the pump and I was no longer thinking about lost opportunities in the land of the Danes.

Thankfully, the official minutes of the International Committee meeting can be found at the bottom of <http://www.iussi.org/>. In addition, John Wenzel was in attendance and has provided the following summary.

**Dear NAS Members,**

**This letter has several parts. I start with a brief review of the great Congress we just enjoyed in Copenhagen. Then, I discuss some very favorable developments**

regarding our publishing contract, and how that affects our dues structure. Third, I ask for your consideration on future officers in the NAS-IUSSI, and for proposals for our breakout meeting two years from now.

#### 1. The Congress:

The 2010 quadrennial Congress is now past, and it was a great experience. I would like to recognize Blaine Cole who did the lion's share of the work to prepare the grants we submitted for student travel to the Congress. Blaine was our bulldog, and was calling Washington even just weeks before the Congress, trying to leverage more support for our students and recent graduates. The North American Section has a terrific track record in earning support for its students, and I know that we only regret that we do not have yet more support to favor all of our promising students. Please join me in thanking Blaine for his role in continuing our history of sending as many people as we can to the Congress. About two and a half years from now, we need to start the process again, so please remember that this is very important when we come looking for help!

The Congress itself was a huge success. Koos Boomsma and his local committee should be applauded for their excellent organization and strong leadership in this important event. Among my personal favorites was the daily lunch, supplied on site, that kept people together and obviated the need to find a restaurant where you and your 700 closest friends could eat quickly and cheaply. There were a number of clever innovations, such as broadcasting plenary lectures into multiple halls so that we could accommodate a great many people in the same rooms that were intimate and familiar for our symposium talks. The final banquet in the Oddfellows house, which was a kind of palace, was spectacular. The evening of drinking and socializing ran quite late, with music, high spirits, and much rejoicing, by famous Scandanavian tradition.

A few facts about the Congress are worth relating to our membership at large. Eight plenary addresses were offered. The program was organized into 28 designated symposia, with two open symposia. Organizers of each of the designated symposia were permitted to invite two speakers, and then chose from the submitted papers to fill out the symposium. In total, 164 contributed talks were presented in addition to the invited talks in the symposia. There were five round table discussions, and more than 400 posters. I know many people (including me) were scheduled to give a poster when they hoped for an oral presentation. For those of you who chose not to attend when told you would have a poster, I understand your decision, but we would have been better if you came, anyway. With the growth of our community, it is no longer possible to offer everyone his or her own slot in the few lecture halls we have. Please support our next Congress by attending even if you don't get the program slot you hope for.

As for who came to the Congress, there were more than 750 registrants from more than 40 countries, and about 45% of people attending were students. The largest geographical contribution was from North America (about at quarter), with the host section (North West European) close behind, and Central Europe just behind that. We can be sure the ratios will change at the next meeting, which will be in Australia, but I am sure North America will again be the largest single cohort.

## 2. Publication contract, and Dues.

The recent renegotiation of our publishing contract includes a new structure of profit sharing, one we have not had before. The first issue of note is that we anticipate that the new structure will permit us to reduce dues to a minimum, probably cutting them to a very small amount would be feasible. Our section should consider if they want to have the least possible dues, or if they want to keep dues to some modest (and profitable) amount so that the North American Section can accumulate a treasure chest to be used for special purposes. Any debate over what to do with our new financial status will be important because this is an opportunity that does not come often to academic societies. One of the "honeymoon" deals that our new contract offers us is that we can publish as many pages as we want the first year. So, I recommend that you sent manuscripts to *Insects Sociiaux* because Editor Johann Billen has an unprecedented opportunity to publish papers!

3. North American Section breakout meeting, 2012. We already have one group interested in hosting the breakout meeting of the NAS. If you and your colleagues think you would like to host it, please move forward with a proposal that includes statements such as: dates of the meeting, physical facilities, equipment support, lodging, total occupancy, cost. An executive committee will examine proposals and present them to the membership for approval, probably at the regular meeting at the Entomological Society of America meeting in December, 2011. Don't be shy, make your proposal!

Sincerely,  
John W. Wenzel

In other news, I am pleased to announce that it is almost time for elections. We need to appoint a new president-elect and a replacement for me. In October I will announce our candidates and ask for your votes. The current executive committee decides on who to invite to run for president (this is often based on previous contributions, participation in the society and bribes), but the secretary/treasurer position is open to anyone who is foolish enough cares to nominate themselves. Remember that the Secretary/Treasurer position is a three year appointment with a lot of responsibilities. The time demands will occasionally be substantial and real commitment is needed to keep the society working properly. But it can also be fun and a great "character" builder. Prospective candidates will need to supply a paragraph about their background and qualifications, which I will then disseminate so that voters can make an informed decision. Please submit your materials to me by October 8.

In case you hadn't noticed, I have been making regular updates to the society webpage (<http://iussi.cyberbee.net/>), including graduate student and post-doctoral position announcements. The two most recent postings are list below. I have also updated the members section. The information there should be double-checked by everyone for accuracy. If you see anything that needs changing, please let me know. I'm also open to formatting suggestions for any part of the website. Zach Huang and I have tried to make this as functional as possible, but this is certainly a work in progress.

And finally, it is time for us to begin considerations for the Eickwort Award and the Nutting Grant. I have attached the announcements for those at the end of the newsletter. The respective nomination and application packages will be due November 15 so it is time to start preparations. For those preparing a termite research grant proposal, keep in mind that there will be numerous qualified candidates so the applications will need to be well crafted.

Cheers.

Colin Brent

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## **MSc/PhD Studentships: Behavioural Genetics and Sociobiology of Insects**

The Social Biology Group at the University of Western Ontario seeks two creative, motivated and evolutionary-minded MSc or PhD students to start in 2011. Research will fall within the general theme of behavioural genetics and sociobiology of insects, preferably with a strong evolutionary slant. Projects could be largely behavioural or molecular (or a combination thereof), and will likely use termites or honey bees as models.

The Social Biology Group (Thompson lab: <http://tinyurl.com/ce87eo>) is a medium sized lab based in the Department of Biology at The University of Western Ontario, Canada. The Department of Biology is a research-intensive department with over 150 students in the graduate programme. The University's picturesque campus is located in London, Ontario (pop. 370,000), close to both large cities (Toronto) and rural areas. UWO provides competitive bursaries and guaranteed Teaching Assistantships to both Canadian and non-Canadian students.

These positions will suit students with a background in evolutionary biology, molecular biology, genomics, bioinformatics, and behaviour. Please email Dr Graham Thompson ([graham.thompson@uwo.ca](mailto:graham.thompson@uwo.ca)) to initiate informal discussions.

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**GRADUATE/POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH POSITIONS IN HONEY BEE GENETICS, NORTH CAROLINA, USA**

North Carolina State University (Raleigh, NC) & University of North Carolina (Greensboro, NC)

We are looking for one or more individuals to join our collaborative research team on a project studying the genetics of honey bee stress resistance and lifespan between Dr. Olav Rueppell (UNC-Greensboro), Dr. David Tarpy (NC State), and Dr. Micheline Strand (Research Triangle Park). The level of these positions is flexible, and we will consider applications for graduate students (PhD level) and/or postgraduate researchers (postdoctoral or research technician).

The project will address genetic and environmental variation in stress resistance and its relation to life expectancy in worker honey bees. The applicants should have molecular research experience, be willing to travel, and be comfortable working with live honey bees. The project is funded for 5 years, and salaries will depend on qualifications.

Please send inquiries and applications until 15th October 2010 to [olav\\_rueppell@uncg.edu](mailto:olav_rueppell@uncg.edu). Applications should be electronic and comprise a CV, contact information of three professional references, and a short (<one-page) description of why you are interested in joining our team. Review of applicants will begin immediately and will continue until the position is filled.

*Distributed in furtherance of the acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. North Carolina State University and North Carolina A&T State University commit themselves to positive action to secure equal opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, age, or disability. In addition, the two Universities welcome all persons without regard to sexual orientation. Dr. David Tarpy [david\\_tarpy@ncsu.edu](mailto:david_tarpy@ncsu.edu), 919.515.1660*

# **CALL FOR NOMINATIONS: William L. and Ruth D. Nutting Student Research Grant**

**Due October 31, 2010**

**Purpose:** To support research by graduate students in the field of basic termite biology. The William L. and Ruth D. Nutting 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.

**Nature:** For 2010, the recipient will receive a research grant of \$2,500. The recipient of the award will be announced on Dec. 12 during the 2010 NAS/IUSSI business meeting held in association with the annual meeting of the ESA in San Diego, California.

**Eligibility:** Any student (graduate or undergraduate) member of NAS/IUSSI conducting research in the area of basic termite biology may apply. Previous award recipients are not eligible for a second award.

**Applications:** Students shall submit an application package in electronic form that includes: a curriculum vitae; a description of the research being proposed (background review, hypotheses being tested, experimental approach, contingencies) that is not to exceed 4 pages; and a letter of support from the student's academic advisor. Be sure to make clear how the grant funds would be utilized. If possible, a single PDF file containing all information would be preferred. ALL documents must be emailed to Colin Brent (iuss.nas@gmail.com) by November 15, 2010.

**Nutting Award Committee:** Michael Haverty will chair the Nutting Award Committee. The Nutting Award Selection Committee shall consist of five members, including Michael Haverty, Colin Brent, Ruth Nutting, and two other members selected by the chair of the Nutting Award Committee.

**CALL FOR NOMINATIONS: George C. Eickwort**  
**Student Research Award**  
**Due October 31, 2009**

Purpose: To recognize research by students in the field of social insect biology for graduate or undergraduate work accomplished in North America or by a student member of NAS/IUSSI pursuing studies elsewhere.

Nature: The award shall consist of a certificate, and a \$1000 honorarium. The award will be presented on Dec. 12 at the 2010 NAS/IUSSI meeting to be held in association with the ESA annual meeting in San Diego, CA.

Eligibility: The award will be given to the student who in the opinion of the award 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 NAS/IUSSI 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/her work. Each nomination must include in electronic form: name and curriculum vitae of the student nominee; title and brief description (not to exceed one page) of the research; reprints of no more than five publications or submitted manuscripts; biographical sketch of the nominee; and two letters of recommendation. If possible, a single PDF file containing all information except recommendation letters would be preferred. ALL documents must be received by the Chair of the NAS/IUSSI Eickwort Student Award Committee by November 15, 2009: Kenna MacKenzie, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, C.P. 5000, 4200 Rte 97, Summerland, BC V0H 1Z0 Canada; Telephone: 250-494-6358; Fax: 250-494-6415; e-mail: Kenna.Mackenzie@agr.gc.ca