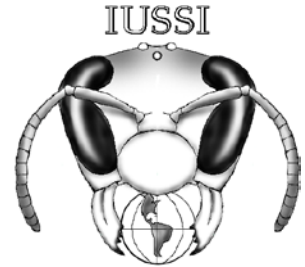


NORTH AMERICAN SECTION

NAS/IUSSI NEWSLETTER February 29, 2012



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Below please find a summary from our November Business Meeting. Along with reading about our excellent Award recipients, please bear in mind this year's deadlines for these two Awards, and the notice of our Section meeting in North Carolina this October 5-7, 2012 (<http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/entomology/apiculture/IUSSI2012/HOME.html>, more news to follow). Also, it's never too early to start thinking about the 2014 IUSSI meeting in Cairns, Australia, July 13-18, G'Day indeed!

Yours,
Jay Evans, Secretary-Treasurer

IUSSI North America Branch Business Meeting, Reno, Nevada, Nov. 15, 2011

President McGlynn called the meeting to order and introduced President-elect Colin Brent.

Nutting Research Grant

The **William L. and Ruth D. Nutting Research Grant** recipient Timothy O'Connor delivered an enthusiastic review of his Award-sponsored research entitled "Origins and success of polygamous supercolonies in the Neotropical termite *Nasutitermes corniger*". As a reminder, the purpose of the Nutting Award is to "support research by graduate students and post doctoral fellows in the field of basic termite biology. Projects with an applied slant may be considered if the primary question is related to basic biology. The William L. and Ruth D. Nutting Award is named in honor of the late Bill Nutting and his ever-supportive wife Ruth. Bill was an outstanding termite biologist who made major contributions to termite biology, both through his own research and mentoring of students." (editorial note, 2012 nominations for this award are due March 16, 2012 to Award Committee Chair Dr. Kenna Mackenzie (kenna.mackenzie@agr.gc.ca)).

Tim received a \$2500 grant to support this research project. Tim was chosen from among 7 applicants. Tim is a member of the NAS-IUSSI and graduated with a bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in 2009. He is currently applying to graduate programs while working as a technician at the University of Oregon. During his spare time, Tim has been working under the guidance of Corrie S.

Moreau (Field Museum of Natural History) on a project of his own devising which examines the relationship between aggression, relatedness and the formation of supercolonies in the neotropical termite *Nasutitermes corniger*. His project is helping to clarify some of the proximate and ultimate factors at work in shaping termite population ecology. Using a combination of microsatellite genotyping, behavioral assays and field monitoring of colony distribution, Tim has addressed two basic questions:

1. Does polygyny facilitate the formation of genetically heterogeneous supercolonies, and if so, how frequently?

2. Are such supercolonies competitively superior to simple-family colonies?

Although the other candidates for the grant had very strong proposals, Tim's discrete, highly feasible and well articulated research plan was the unanimous choice for the selection committee (Michael Haverty, Colin Brent, Ruth Nutting, Kenna MacKenzie).

Eickwort Award

Next, the **Eickwort Award** was presented to Sandra Rehan, who came from Toronto to attend the meeting and receive her Award (the hardware and dollars for which arrived in the mail some time later). 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 Ulrich Mueller, Anna Dornhaus, Phil Starks, Andy Suarez, Heather Mattila and Kenna MacKenzie, Chair. Stay tuned for deadlines for the 2012 Award, due in Fall, 2012.

Selection Committee Statement

This year, again, an exceptional group of individuals were nominated for the Eickwort Student Award with any one of them worthy of the recognition for their record in social insect research. The North American Section of the International Union for the Study of Social Insects is proud to announce that **Sandra Rehan of Brock University in Ontario, Canada** was selected as the recipient of the **2011 Eickwort Student Award**. While Sandra's research has advanced our understanding of the evolution of social behaviour in insects, she is also recognized for her scientific productivity, commitment to teaching and active service to academia and her university.

Sandra Rehan was a student of Miriam Richards of Brock University, and during her PhD studies spent three years as a Visiting Scientist in the laboratory of Michael Schwarz of Flinders University of South Australia in Adelaide. For her graduate research, Sandra focused on studying social evolution in the ceratinine bees. Not only did she carry out a major molecular phylogenetic analysis of the biogeographic origins of the genus *Ceratina*, she also observed social behaviour of several previously unknown or little-known *Ceratina* species and identified this genus as an important new model organism for studying social evolution. She did this by integrating diverse approaches including behavioural and ecological experimentation, taxonomy, molecular phylogenetics and relatedness research. Sandra is a very productive young scientist, already publishing 13 papers (8 as first author). She has received numerous awards including National Science and Engineering Council of Canada Undergraduate, Graduate and Post-Graduate Scholarships and an Endeavour Fellowship for

collaborative research in Australia. One of her references described Sandra as follows “The energy and depth that she has brought to her research stands out as an inspirational example of how studies of social insects can be put into the forefront of evolutionary biology” and “...shown just how George Eickwort’s legacy can be taken into the 21st century”. Sandra continues her social-insect research in a post-doctoral position in the lab of Tim Linksvayer at the University of Pennsylvania, working on colony-level gene expression and social networks. The Award Committee is very pleased to announce that Sandra Rehan is the recipient of the 2011 Eickwort Student Award.

Other Business

Olav Rueppell provided an update on the NAS Breakout Meeting to be held at Haw River State Park, in central North Carolina. Information on the meeting and the availability of student aid is posted at the meeting website, <http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/entomology/apiculture/IUSSI2012/HOME.html>.

There was discussion as in the prior year of developing an online system for receiving dues payments, this is still pending.

Proposals were solicited and discussed for section and meeting symposia for the 2012 ESA meeting.

Pres. McGlynn passed on the gavel to Current President Theresa Pitts-Singer and the meeting was adjourned.