

IDAHO ENTOMOLOGY GROUP NEWSLETTER

Volume 34, Number 1, page 1

28 January 2007

The Idaho Entomology Group (IEG) is composed of professional and non-professional people interested in any facet of the study of insects. Participation is not restricted to Idaho. Membership dues are \$5 / year (non-domestic E-subscriptions only), used to cover costs of the bimonthly newsletter. Application can be made to any officer (see below) or the Idaho Entomology Group, c/o Orma J. Smith Museum of Natural History, Albertson College of Idaho, Caldwell, ID 83605, USA. **Materials for publication** (e.g. important dates, summaries of meetings, references, publications of members and others, collection records, etc.) should be sent directly to the Editor. Deadline for submission is the 20th of every second month. Back issues are available at cost (contact: William H. Clark, OJS Museum of Natural History, Albertson College of Idaho, Caldwell, ID 83605). Advertisements are included in the *Newsletter* at the Editor's discretion when items are thought to be within the membership's interest. There is no cost for advertisement, deference in publication is given to members. The IEG is an affiliate of the Idaho Academy of Sciences.

2006 OFFICERS: **PRESIDENT**, James K. Ryan, 6614 Newman St., Boise, ID 83704; jameskryan@hotmail.com; **SEC./TREAS.**, Barbara Alexander, 2715 Snowflake Dr., Boise, ID 83706 ☎: 208-344-6017, 208-863-4024 (cell), bmerrill@cablone.net; **NEWSLETTER EDITOR**, Paul Blom, 1107 Grant Ave., Prosser, WA 99350-1115 ☎: 509-788-0181/786-9358, e-mail pblom@BioDataManagement.com.

----- C A L E N D A R -----

February	3	OJS Museum Workday
	23	Newsletter materials due to Editor
March	3	OJS Museum Workday
April	7	OJS Museum Workday
	23	Newsletter materials due to Editor

----- 2007 DUES -----

Yes, it's time for dues again. Please submit your \$ 5 to Barb Alexander, 2715 Snowflake Dr., Boise, ID 83706. For those of you who receive the Newsletter via regular mail the year through which you have paid is on your address label. For those of electronic distribution the year is imbedded in your name on the 'To' address line of the announcing email.

----- CHRISTMAS PARTY -----

The Christmas Party at Al and Pat Gillogly's was thoroughly enjoyable. The pot luck dinner was a delicious smorgasbord of fine foods. The highlight was hostess Pat's marinated meat dish. The desserts were excellent. Here I will single out Pat's insect cookies and multi-layered orange spice cake, and Kathy Gariety's incredible cheesecake.

Comfortable socializing amid elegant Christmas decor made spirits bright. A brief business meeting followed by slides of Ireland, Baja and butterflies were the postprandial highlight. Al showed his impressive passalid beetle collection. Pat described the backgrounds of her gorgeous pottery pieces, and presented samples of her beadwork. Conversations flowed among the 20+ guests. I was most interested to learn from Al that stray dogs at Fort Ord virtually all had antibodies to plague when he ordered them tested.

The evening was memorable. On behalf of all who came, or wish that they could have come, I again thank Al and Pat for their many preparations and gracious hospitality.

Jim Ryan

----- RECENT PUBS BY MEMBERS -----

Westcott, Richard L. and Henry A. Hespenheide. 2006. The description of a new species of *Agrilus* Curtis, with distributional records, and taxonomic and biological notes for Agrilinae and Trachyinae (Coleoptera: Buprestidae) of Mexico and Central America. *Zootaxa* 1367:1-35.

Clark, William H. and **Blom, Paul E.** 2007. Ants of the Idaho National Laboratory. *Sociobiology* 49.2:1-117.

---- WILLIAM BARR HONORED BY I.E.G. --

Rick Westcott proposed that Dr. William Barr be honored with a lifelong membership in the I.E.G. This nomination was publicized in the newsletter with solicitation for comments. Several were received.

At the Christmas party a brief business meeting opened this issue to the members present. One comment received reflected on the small size of the group and its limited resources. Would this nomination be meaningful to Dr. Barr? All persons spoke highly of his qualifications and contributions to Idaho entomology. To further these points, the October 2006 newsletter contained a tribute to Bill and Audrey Barr, with highlights of his achievements.

Two separate motions were considered. It was deemed **MOVED** (in absentia) by Rick Westcott that the I.E.G. create the position of Lifelong Member, which automatically includes a Newsletter subscription. **SECONDED** by Bob Chehey. **CARRIED** unanimously. Motion two: **MOVED** by Rick Westcott that this first award of this position be made to Dr. William F. Barr. **SECONDED** by Alan Gillogly. Discussion revealed widespread recognition and support for Dr. Barr. The motion was **CARRIED** unanimously.

The membership secretary and newsletter editor are hereby notified so they may fulfill this vote of the membership.

Jim Ryan

----- O.J. SMITH -----
MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY NOTES
(ALBERTSON COLLEGE OF IDAHO)

Museum ☎: (208) 459-5507, bclark@albertson.edu.
<http://www.albertson.edu/campus/community/museum>

**** MUSEUM MAILING LIST**

To get on the Museum's mailing list contact Bill Clark at clarkfam1@mindspring.com

**** MUSEUM MONTHLY VOLUNTEER WORKDAYS**

For the Workday Schedule see the Museum Event Web Page:
<http://www.albertson.edu/campus/community/museum/event.htm>

The Museum is open all day on Workday Saturdays, 8 AM until late afternoon. Enter via west basement door. We have a variety of Museum tasks that need volunteer assistance. We currently need someone to construct wooden bases for displays. We have tasks for students and non-students alike. We need volunteers to assume a variety of Museum duties and responsibilities. We have the following needs: Plywood, particle board, Masonite, 1x2" stock lumber, electrical fixtures, bookshelves for journals and funds for specific Museum projects.

We supply coffee and hot water for drinks as well as a taco lunch for volunteers. We usually have a brief research seminar at noon. The Museum collects aluminum for recycle. Please leave in Museum or contact Bill Clark (208-375-8605), John Keebaugh (208-459-5507), or Dr. Eric Yensen (208-459-5331).

Bill Clark

**** COMING 2006 LUNCH SEMINARS**

February	3	Dr. Ron Bitner – "Bee Introductions and Fine Aussie Wines."
March	3	Gene and Sandy Ralston – "Underwater Search and Recovery".
April	7	Barbara Alexander – "Insect Art."
May	5	Mary Clark – "Travels in Ireland, Part 1"
June	2	Mary Clark – "Travels in Ireland, Part 2"
July	7	Dr. Paul Castrovillo – "Idaho's Most Distinctive Butterflies" and "Training for the Fourth of July Butterfly Count."
August	4	Elizabeth Dickey – "Bug Day Announcement" AND Gene M. Gray – "Vegetation and Sage Grouse in West Central Idaho."
September	8	Dr. James K. Ryan - "Ultrasonic Control of Pests."
October	6	Jan Summers Duffy - "Egyptian Archaeology."
November	3	Alan Gillogly - "Biology of Passalid Beetles."
December	1	Dr. David M. Ward, Jr. - "Baja California Travels and Entomology."

**** IDACORP ONCE AGAIN GRANTS ORMA J. SMITH MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY CASH AWARD**

William H. Clark, Director of the Orma J. Smith Museum of Natural History, received an announcement on December 4, 2006, that the Orma J. Smith Museum of

Natural History will receive a \$100 award from IDACORP for his volunteer efforts at the Museum during 2006. Clark is employed by Idaho Power Company as a Macroinvertebrate Biologist conducting research on Endangered Species Act listed snails in the Middle Snake River.

IDACORP makes annual VIP (Volunteer Involvement Program) awards to non-profit organizations in the names of employees who have volunteered during the year. Clark was cited for his volunteer efforts in most aspects of the Museum's operations including volunteer coordination, collections curation and management, fund raising, and research. While the actual award is small, Clark says that the news reaches thousands of IDACORP employees as well as others and as such is great PR for the Museum.

**** 6 JAN MUSEUM WORKDAY**

6 Jan., 2007. Museum Day at O. J. Smith Museum of Natural History. We had a great group of 21 including one new volunteer, Tim Hatch, who was completing a community service requirement for his High School Science class. He did a great job and we hope to see him back again. Thanks to Bill Clark for coordinating with Tim's dad to get him here for the workday. Fish, Anthropology, Mammals, Insects, and the Museum shop all saw volunteers working on projects and, as usual, a lot of good progress was made.

Bill and Mary Clark normally make tacos for our volunteers. However, they were on their way to Texas to collect ants in Big Bend National Park so Bob and Becky Hayes stepped in (felt sorry for us!) and fixed the lunch. Bob and Becky did an admirable job of spoiling us with roast beef sandwiches and all the trimmings. What a spread! Lunch was delicious and we all appreciate their efforts.

Lunch time announcements included that of a recent gift from Dr. Jim Smith of Boise. He has recently donated \$5,000 to the Museum which will be used to purchase drawers for insect cabinets. This generous gift will give us much needed insect storage space. Thank you, Dr. Smith! A thank you card was signed by the volunteers present and will be sent to Dr. Smith.

The lunch seminar was provided by Ben Simko from the Idaho State Dept. of Agriculture. Ben is an entomologist whose responsibilities include working on problems associated with invasive species here in Idaho. Of course, not all of the pests he deals with are of the 6-legged variety but the majority are plants and insects. Many have agricultural significance. Pests such as the potato tuberworm moth (*Gelechiidae*, *Phthorimaea operculella* (Zeller)) and cereal leaf beetle (*Chrysomelidae*, *Oulema melanopus* (Linnaeus)) have potential for causing significant crop loss in Idaho. Others, such as some of the cerambycids (wood boring beetles), may pose risks to residential plants or forests. Still other invaders affect range lands and waterways in Idaho.

There are a variety of Local, State, and Federal

groups monitoring, studying and working to control these invaders. Museums such as ours can play a vital role as sources of information and repositories of specimens. Of course, as many of you already know, the O. J. Smith Museum works with Idaho Power, the Division of Environmental Quality, and other governmental agencies. For example, we store specimens of snails and other aquatic invertebrates as well as fish while our database stores information about those specimens. Many thanks to Ben for an excellent presentation. Dave Ward, Jr.

** SAWTOOTH BUTTERFLY BOOK FEATURES MUSEUM SPECIMENS

Photographs of the Orma J. Smith Museum's butterfly collection appear in the recently published *Discovering Sawtooth's Butterflies*. by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist Ray Vizgirdas. The author spent several days working with Museum curators to take photographs needed for the book. This is an excellent example of both public and scientific use of some of the Museum's extensive natural history collections. The book was published by the Idaho State University Press and is available in the Museum Gift Shop for \$13.95.

----- IMAGO NEWSLETTER -----

There is a new newsletter for the Oregon State Collection of Arthropods called Imago. Chris Marshall took the curatorial position not too long ago. At the recent ECN meeting in Indianapolis Chris provided a summary of the OSU collection including his vision for where the collection is headed. Contact Chris, marshach@science.oregonstate.edu, if you are interested in the newsletter or learning more about the arthropod collection at OSU.

Paul Blom and Rick Westcott

----- MEMBERS IN THE NEWS -----

This is not an item from the main stream media but it is news to us. Kent Fothergill has moved. New address: 700 Wallace Avenue, Sikeston, MO 63801-2147. Your Editor will certainly miss his contributions to the News.

----- ENTOMOLOGICAL RESOURCES ----

California Desert Ants <http://www.desertants.org>
 New World Army Ants <http://www.armyants.org>
 Notes From Underground
<http://www.notesfromunderground.org>

----- DEER FLAT NATL WILDL REFUGE ---

Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge has a quarterly newsletter. You can read the issues on line at <http://www.fws.gov/deerflat/shoreline.htm>.

----- INSECTS AND PLANTS -----

Ever since Charles Darwin let the world know the secret in his 1875 book *Insectivorous Plants* (get a free e-copy! <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/5765>), people have been fascinated with the concept of plants as

predators. Genus *Nepenthes* had members that Victorian explorers reported to lure young virgins (only female) to their deaths. Later Audrey, in the Little Shop of Horrors (a 1960 Roger Corman film, subsequently developed to a 1982 musical, and the musical adapted into a 1986 film...) maintained our fascination with flesh eating plants. Even Super Mario Brothers features the piranha plants which are deadly to Mario. As much as we desire plants as top carnivores, the truth is these plants are correctly termed insectivorous – and typically small insects at that.

Insectivorous plants typically inhabit bogs and fens, areas of nutrient poor soils with abundant moisture. The arid steppe of Southern Idaho is not a place in which these plants will thrive, but we did find something close...

On November 6th of 2006, while collecting seed for Conservation Seeding and Restoration, Inc. in Twin Falls County we found an individual of *Sphaerophoria* (Diptera: Syrphidae) that had become entangled in the hairs on the calyx tube of *Mentzelia laevicaulis* (Violales: Loasaceae) and expired there. While this was new to us, it is not new: Jepson in his 1925 *A Manual of the Flowering Plants of California*, depicts insects (look closely) that have gotten hooked on the barbed hairs of *Mentzelia micrantha*. This morphological adaptation is a defense against predation by insects. In this instance, a beautiful, and truly plant-harmless insect was the victim. The pollinator of this evening blooming plant is a hawkmoth species (Lepidoptera: Sphingidae) (Grant, V. 1985. Additional observations on temperate North American hawkmoth flowers. *Botanical Gazette* 146.4:517-520), which due to their hummingbird-like nectar foraging strategy would be able to avoid the hairs.

While *M. laevicaulis* did kill this insect, it is not an insectivorous relationship as it does not derive a nutritional benefit from the death. Only plants that suck out juices and digest amino acids are considered true carnivorous plants. Regardless, the sport killing of insects is a longstanding plant pastime. Insectivorous plants have evolved independently several times (homoplasy), for instance pitfall type traps have evolved at least four separate times. So far carnivory has been documented in at least 9 plant families and 600 species. While Idaho houses few carnivorous species, dangerous levels of stickiness raise the potential of a 'near carnivorous' or 'protoinsectivorous' plant prowling closer than you might think. Two common Idaho natives, *Geranium viscosissimum* (Geraniales: Geraniaceae) and *Potentilla arguta* (Rosales: Rosaceae) have been implicated in shady insect dealings (Spomer, G.G. 1999. Evidence of protocarnivorous capabilities in *Geranium viscosissimum* and *Potentilla arguta* and other sticky plants. *International Journal of Plant Science* 160:98-101). Entomologists do you know where your insects are?

Finding the artifacts of this event points out that the interactions between insects and plants are fascinating, wonderful, and worth paying attention to.

Kent Fothergill and Dylan Levy-Boyd

----- DECEMBER BAJA TRIP -----

As if December isn't busy enough, Dave Ward, Bill Clark, and Mary Clark decided to spend Dec 14-20 south of the border in Ensenada working at CICESE. The Centro de Investigacion Cientifica y de Educacion Superior de Ensenada (CICESE) is the site of an insect collection that we established and have nurtured along for over 10 years now. Most of the week was spent curating specimens in the collection but Bill and Mary did spend one very long day in the field. Departing from Ensenada about 4:00 AM, they drove to Cataviña, about 5 hours to the south, where they picked up one remote sensor and installed 2 others. These are sensors that help us record climatological data year-round at our primary study site. Two of the sensors had malfunctioned and had been brought back for repair on our August 2006 trip. They also met with Ralph Schoonmaker who is fortunate enough to spend his winters in the Cataviña area. He is very knowledgeable about Baja so is a great contact in the area. He'll be helping to monitor some of our rain gauges and thermometers in the area. Bill and Mary returned to Ensenada about 9:00 PM after a long but productive day!

Bill's birthday happened to fall during the trip (hmmmm, any possibility that this was planned??) and one trip highlight was a birthday dinner at a restaurant co-owned by one of the CICESE professors (Horacio de la Cueva). Another night we enjoyed chorizo made from abalone which came from Cedros Island, a remote island off the coast of Baja. And, of course, there were tacos from some of the many local taco stands.

The trip was also productive in that we were able to spend some time with Daniela Ramirez. She is an undergraduate student (and IEG member) who has been working in the CICESE collection for several years. She has participated in a number of community education days which bring recognition to the insect collection at CICESE and provides great community education (mostly aimed at kids) about insects and other terrestrial arthropods. Daniela had just returned from the ECN-ESA meeting where she had presented a talk about the CICESE collection. She's responsible for many of the day-to-day things that happen in the entomology collection so it was valuable to spend some time coordinating future activities with her.

The CICESE entomology collection is growing rapidly but I would emphasize that it is an effort of many people and we truly appreciate all who contribute whether it be collecting and curating, specimen identification, financial support, etc. We did just find out that we were awarded a \$6,000 grant for the coming year from the Schlinger Foundation. This will fund Daniela's work for next summer and the purchase of a good number of CAS insect drawers. We're excited and very grateful! Bill is to be congratulated for his work in getting this grant. For those of you who may attend ESA and ECN meetings, remember that ESA is in San Diego next December and we are hoping to have a field trip to Ensenada for those

interested in visiting the collection.

As usual it was hard to leave. We never get EVERYTHING done and caught up while we're there but we made very good progress and enjoyed time with good friends. What more can you ask for? Dave Ward, Jr.

----- SPIDER SEX TALK -----

Though of 8 rather than 6 legs, here is an interesting web page on spider sex life !!

http://www.livescience.com/animalworld/060728_spider_sextalk.html

--- MAGIC VALLEY FALSE CHINCH BUGS

When I moved from Louisiana for a PostDoc with the University of Idaho as an Agricultural Extension Entomologist, I wasn't sure what to expect from the insect fauna in Idaho. I was fairly disappointed in the amount of "pests" that I encountered, but when there was an infestation of some kind, it was an infestation like I had not seen before. I had heard of the Mormon cricket migrations and enjoyed seeing them, but I didn't expect a false chinch bug (Lygaeidae: *Nysius* sp.) migration. The first specimens brought in were from a gentleman in Buhl (1500E 3800N) on July 7, 2006. He stated that they were found "throughout the pasture and shop areas" and there were "only about a million" of them. There were no other reports until the end of July and first week of August. People near the Snake River Canyon rim in Twin Falls were calling saying that there were millions of these "ant-like, aphid-like bugs" on their sidewalks, driveways and houses. I also received specimens from Cassia County (location and date unknown – they were brought in to the extension office and were put aside because it was right before the county fair which was August 14-19).



False Chinch Bug mat in North Twin Falls County 2-Aug-06

On August 2, I went out to see what all the fuss was about. It was really impressive to see the ground moving beneath me and to see it was first instars causing the ground to move. One lady I spoke with said that she was

complaining that her husband hadn't cleaned the siding like she asked, and when she went out to look, every slat of siding had about an inch thick band of false chinch bugs walking around her house. Her husband had gotten out the insecticide and it was amazing to see the piles of their carcasses along the side walk, especially since he hadn't made a dent in the population. After they showed up at my residence on August 3, I remembered that about a week prior, the fence that I park in front of was covered with small lygaeid adults. It was then I knew that I had seen the warning signs, but I had been busy and dismissed the event.

I was getting so many calls a day over false chinch bugs, I contacted the Magic Valley Times News and asked if they could help get the word out. At first they weren't too impressed with the idea of insects being newsworthy, but they assigned a writer to include it in his piece about reptiles, expanding it to creepy crawlies. He was bewildered by the numbers of insects and did a whole story on the false chinch bugs. The article was picked up by the AP and ended up in USA today as the blurb for Idaho in "Across the USA: News from every state."

Table 1. Dates and location of known sites where false chinch bugs were considered a nuisance by residents.

Date	Location
7 July 2006	Buhl, Id (1500 E 3800 N)
28 July - 3 August	Twin Falls, ID (3200 E, Falls Ave.)
1 - 10 August	Twin Falls, ID (2875 E 4200 N) Snake River Canyon rim
3 August	Twin Falls, ID (2925E 4130 N) Snake River Canyon rim
9 August	Kimberly, ID (3800 E 3900N) – Hansen Bridge overlook
pre 14 August	Unknown Location in Cassia County
5 September	Twin Falls, ID (2925 E 4130 N) Snake River Canyon rim
6 September	Kimberly, ID (3500 E 3200 N) Kimberly Golf Course area

I spoke with a woman who said that her driveway had about 3 X 5 ft area with an inch-thick mat of the critters, which, while impressive, pales compared to reports for 2 inch-thick mats in Utah. Outbreaks typically last two to three weeks but can be six weeks and the latter was the case this year for the Magic Valley. I saw adults at the end of July and following progeny at my residence near the canyon rim the first week of August. Then around August 31, I began to see the adults again, and about a week later the ground was covered with first instars. The second infestation was not as large as the first, but still noteworthy as calls started coming in from people in Twin Falls County about millions of "ant-like, aphid-like bugs" invading their property.



False Chinch Bug first instar, North Twin Falls County. 2-Aug-06

Additional information, in case they show up at your neighbor's house and they don't appreciate the beauty of the migration. Control is difficult because they tend to migrate, and most insecticides available have little residual so multiple applications would have to be made. Removal of weed hosts early in the season may help. Using a heavy stream of water often is enough to kill the young instars.

Outbreaks of false chinch bugs are more likely to occur following wet winters that produce large weed populations. They have a wide host range and can be pests in several of the regional crops (but there were no reports of them being an agricultural pest this season). They prefer plants in the family Brassicacea and often go unnoticed until hosts senesce and then begin migrating in search of food. Even though they move in such high numbers, damage is rarely reported. They can overwinter in all three stages throughout their range, but are thought to overwinter as nymphs in the West. Nymphs begin to emerge in late winter or early spring, feed, and reproduce. Eggs eclose in 4-7 days and adults will emerge in about 3 weeks. There are four or more generations in Utah. Utah reports that false chinch bugs are active from May to late September, with the most activity in July, based upon specimens received. Receipt of specimens indicates that false chinch bugs are most active in the Magic Valley in August.

Article by Kelly V. Tindall, Photos by Kent Fothergill

----- IEG AT THE ECN / ESA -----

Member Daniela Ramirez (and Bill Clark) presented a talk at the recent ECN meeting in Indianapolis about the insect collection at CICESE. Alan Gillogly gave a talk on his passalid work at the ESA meeting, and Kent Fothergill provided a poster. Others? Tell your Editor so I can highlight our activities on the national stage.

----- NEWSLETTER ITEMS -----

Remember to send your news items to the Editor. The next deadline is 23 March 2007. Illustrative photos of ID or PNW insects and activities are encouraged!

----- EYE CANDY ANSWERS -----

From our last issue: the "Top insect" though now in the Reduviidae, the Assassin Bugs, Elizabeth Dickey pointed out that as phymatids were commonly called Ambush Bugs.

----- WHO'S WHO CONTEST -----

Name the two entomologists in this photo and win a copy of C.S. Papp's book on North American Beetles from the Orma J. Smith Museum of Natural History. The photographer (George Stephens) and subjects not eligible to win.

Submit your guesses to the Editor (1107 Grant Ave, Prosser, WA 99350, pblom@biodatamanagement.com) and the first correct submission will win.



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