



NEWSLETTER of the Wisconsin Entomological Society

Volume 6 Number 1

Dean B. Faber, Editor

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EDITOR'S NOTES:

This is my first effort ever as an editor and I'm not quite sure how to begin. Perhaps a few lines telling you about myself would be in order. I graduated from the University of Connecticut in May 1977 with a B.S. degree in Biology. My main entomological interest is in the taxonomy and biology of the scelionid wasps. Because several tribes of scelionids are exclusively parasitic on spider eggs, this ties in neatly with my major non-entomological interest (the taxonomy and biology of salticid spiders). Despite my lack of experience I volunteered for the job of editor because I thought it would be an enjoyable and broadening experience. I hope you'll all bear with me as I learn the ropes.

A letter arrived recently bearing greetings from our former editor Jim Mertins and the latest installment (XIV) of the History of Wisconsin Entomology. My thanks to Jim for his continuing interest in and contributions to the newsletter. Speaking of which I would like to reiterate the often made request for contributions from members. If you have entomological information which you feel would be of general interest please feel free to contribute it to the newsletter.

As many of you probably have learned, our president Bill Sieker suffered a stroke during the month of June. I'm sure you'll all join me in wishing him a speedy and complete recovery.

NOTICE:

For Sale: Fine hand finished insect and spider photographs, mounted and ready to frame. Representatives from most of your favorite orders, all in natural settings, feeding, mating, etc. Ask about specific families, genera, species. Black and white, \$15. to \$40. Clearance of un-mounted "seconds", as-is, from \$3. Charles Behnke, Rt. 2 Box 152, Dodgeville, Wisc. 53533, (608) 583-2893

FORUM:

I'd like to bring up the possibility of choosing a recognizable insect to serve as the symbol of our society as a replacement for the current rather stylized one. Our current symbol is rather difficult to assign to order. We could choose one insect as a permanent symbol of the society, or use a different insect each year, or whatever.

My first choice would be an odonate, perhaps an aeshnid or libelluid. Wisconsin is a state with many lakes and rivers and a large odonate fauna. Dragonflies are beneficial insects and a dragonfly would be a distinctive and easily recognized symbol. Any comments on this would be welcomed.

Dean B. Faber

(This department will appear whenever there is material for it. Basically, I see it as a place where opinions and suggestions can be stated about any aspect of the society, its current status, or its goals. Make your views about the society known! editor.)

HISTORY OF WISCONSIN ENTOMOLOGY - XIV

by James W. Mertins

Along with new programs in the 1960's, some significant changes in emphasis occurred in existing programs. Whereas, in the late 1950's, insect suppression with insecticides was an important aspect of the work of about 50% of the research staff, by the mid-sixties, insecticides were important to the work of less than 25% of the research staff. For example, Prof. Norris' initial attack on Dutch elm disease with systemic insecticides evolved into physiological studies on symbiosis of bark beetles, fungi, bacteria, and tree chemistry. When California encephalitis developed as a public health problem in Wisconsin, Prof. DeFoliart phased out insecticide research on livestock insects and expanded research on arboviruses. These and other moves were wise at the time. Continued testing of insecticides had frequently become an exercise in futility, and because of public attitudes and the lack of sufficient alternate technologies there were more opportunities for developing integrated pest suppression programs and the basics behind them.

Following Prof. Dicke in the chairmanship of the department, Dr. Gene DeFoliart served from 1968 until late 1975. With a B.S. from Oklahoma State University and the Ph. D. from Cornell, where he specialized in medical and veterinary entomology from 1948-51, Dr. DeFoliart went first to the University of Wyoming as an assistant professor in 1951. At the time of his departure for Wisconsin in 1959, he held the rank of associate professor, and came to UW with fine qualifications to assume responsibilities for work on pests of man and animals.

One of several significant advancements during Chairman DeFoliart's tenure was the acquisition of both a transmission electron microscope and a scanning E.M. A special laboratory with darkroom facilities, etc, for the machines was outfitted jointly with Plant Pathology in the basement of Russell Labs during

1969, and in 1971 a new staff member, Dr. Stanley Carlson, took charge of the laboratory. A second new staff member during the early 1970's was Dr. Michael Karandinos, who arrived in 1970 as a visiting assistant professor in insect ecology and population dynamics. He replaced Prof. John Medler, who spent the years between 1968 and 1975 at the University of Ife in Nigeria as Chief of Party for the University of Wisconsin-AID program there. Prof. Karandinos' position was later put on a permanent basis, and after a year back in Madison, Prof. Medler has recently departed for more overseas service as Director of a MUCIA program in Jakarta, Indonesia, and approaching retirement.

In 1976, Dr. G.M. Boush succeeded Prof. DeFoliart as Chairman of the Department of Entomology after acting temporarily in that position for several months. With the retirements of Profs. Shenefelt and Dicke in 1976 and 1977, respectively, two new staff members were brought in to fill their positions; Dr. Shenefelt retains Emeritus Professor status in the department. Dr. Robert Jeanne arrived from Boston University, and is building a research program on the biology and behavior of social insects, especially vespid wasps. Dr. B. Jane Harrington is the first woman faculty member in Entomology, and came to Wisconsin from Seton Hall University in early 1977. She has taken over direction of the Insectarium (now renamed the Insect Research Collection, ed.) and initiated a research program on the taxonomy and biology of the Lygaeidae.

ARTICLES:

WISCONSIN 1978 THE YEAR OF THE MOSQUITO?

The major entomological news item in Wisconsin this summer has definitely been dipteran! The consensus is that the mosquito problem has been about the worst in memory for the month of July. "The situation has to be experienced to be believed", quipped the Wisconsin Cooperative Pest Survey Bulletin of July 28, 1978.

The primary culprit has apparently been Aedes vexans, a quick reproducing species that packs a real wallop. Fortunately this species hasn't been implicated as a carrier of any organisms dangerous to humans.

The same cannot be said however for Aedes triseriatus. This mosquito is a carrier of the LaCrosse strain of encephalitis virus. Twelve cases of encephalitis in humans have been reported in the state by July 15 of this year, with one resulting fatality. This is an unusually high number of cases for this early in the summer. A typical yearly total for Wisconsin is about twenty cases.

Aedes triseriatus breeds strictly in tree holes in the wild, but has adapted to standing water collected in such man-made objects as tin cans and old tires. Due to a relative lack of breeding sites, A. triseriatus is fortunately less common than A. vexans.

Although the probability of being bitten by an individual of A. triseriatus carrying encephalitis virus is undoubtedly rather small, a few precautions are advisable. First, limit the number of potential breeding sites for mosquitoes

by emptying out any containers outdoors that may have standing water in them for long periods. Second, if forced by necessity (as in gardening) or desire (as in insect collecting) to be in mosquito infested areas consider wearing a repellent. There is relatively little danger of contracting encephalitis, but an ounce of prevention in this case isn't costly in time and effort.

HONEYBEE VOTED STATE INSECT

The WES NEWSLETTER Volume 6 Number 1 contained an article on the debate over the choice of an official state insect. Here is the unfortunate conclusion to the story.

Effective May 16, 1978 section 1.10 of the Wisconsin State statutes was amended to make the honeybee the state's official insect. Economics overrules reality again. The way the bill was handled before it even got out of committee illustrates this.

A bill to make the honeybee Wisconsin's official state insect was submitted by state Rep. Gervase Hephner (D-Chilton) on March 8, 1977, "at the request of the Wisconsin Honey Producers Association, Inc.". An identical bill had been introduced on February 2, 1977 by Rep Richard Matty (R.-Crivitz) on behalf of a class of third grade schoolchildren from Marinette, Wisc. This was two months before the Hephner bill was submitted. The Assembly Agriculture Committee endorsed the Hephner bill 12-0 despite the primacy of the Matty bill, and despite that according to Matty "it is the same bill, word for word.". The Assembly Agriculture Committee also discarded an amendment proposed by Hephner that the state insect be chosen by a vote of the state's gradeschool children.

On March 14, 1978 the assembly voted the honeybee Wisconsin's official state insect by a vote of 97-1. An amendment to make the honeybee the state domestic insect and the monarch butterfly the official state insect was voted down by a large majority. On March 31, 1978 the senate supported the assembly's choice. An amendment by Sen. David Berger (D.-Milwaukee) which proposed that the honeybee be named the official state domestic insect and the dragonfly be named the official state wildlife insect was rejected without debate.

The honeybee is about as unique to Wisconsin as the domestic dog. Wisconsin is fifth in the U.S. in honey production not first. The other official Wisconsin state symbols (muskellunge, badger, galena, dairy cow, etc.) are all things unique to or at least characteristic of our state. The honeybee symbolizes nothing. It is truly unfortunate that with a host of other possibilities, the lawmakers of our state made such an unrepresentative choice.

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST:

The Insects. Readings from Scientific American
Thomas Eisner and Edward O. Wilson, eds. 1977.
352 pages, 325 illustrations. W.H. Freeman and Company,
San Francisco. \$7.95, softbound.

This collection of articles from Scientific American will be of interest

to entomologists at any level from beginner to expert. It examines the factors contributing to the insects achieving their position as the dominant group of terrestrial animals. Among the myriad topics considered are: insect flight muscle, juvenile hormones, polarized light navigation, melanism in moths, the interrelationships of butterflies and plants, and slavery in ants. The articles are written in the inimitable Scientific American style, presenting the subject to the reader in nontechnical vocabulary, but never talking down to him. In addition, the illustrations are generally excellent. At a cost this low this fine book is within everyone's price range.

The Mayflies of North and Central America.
George F. Edmunds, Jr., Steven L. Jensen, and Lewis Berner. 1976.
330 pages, 432 figures. University of Minnesota Press,
Minneapolis. \$28.50, hardbound.

This will be the definitive work on North American Ephemeroptera for a very long time to come. The book contains extensive information on collecting and preparation techniques, keys to genus for both nymphs and adults of all North American genera, and descriptions of each genus. In addition there is a section on habitat and life history information for both nymphs and adults for each genus. The book has excellent illustrations and a well thought out layout. A must for anyone seriously interested in aquatic insects.

Carabid Beetles in Their Environments, a Study on
Habitat Selection by Adaptations.
H. U. Thiele. 1977. Springer-Verlag.

This book is about carabids, but would be interesting reading to anyone trying to understand how any group of animals fits into its environment. Included among the topics covered are: adaptive value of morphological variation, interspecific and intraspecific interaction (competition, aggregation, parasites, predators), ecological aspects of activity patterns, climatic factors influencing distribution, and ecological aspects of evolution. Regardless of what group of insects interest the reader, this book is full of information which will make him ask, "I wonder about this with respect to theidae?".

Arachnida 2nd edition. Theodore Savory. 1977. 340 pages, 197 figures.
Academic Press, New York, London, San Francisco.

Anyone interested in learning about the second largest class in the animal kingdom couldn't hope to find a better introduction than this book. It spans the entire subject, from phylogeny to biochemistry, from embryology to zoogeography. There are sections which discuss all facets of arachnid biology for the class as a whole, and then a section is devoted to a thorough discussion of each of the arachnid orders. This book is unique in both the breadth of its coverage of the subject and in that it gives an equally detailed account of all the arachnid orders.

WISCONSIN ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please Print:

Last Name First Name
Address: _____
Street City State Zip

Organization represented (if any)

Title or Occupation Phone: (include area code)

_____ Individual membership (\$2.00 per year)
_____ Organization membership (\$10.00 per year)
_____ Sustaining membership (\$5.00 per year)
_____ Patron membership (\$25.00 or more per year)

General Interest Area

_____ Aquatic Insects _____ Collecting and/or Taxonomy
_____ 4-H or Scout Member _____ Insect Photography
_____ Extension Worker _____ Physiology
_____ Life History, Biology, & Behavior _____ Apiculture
_____ Other _____ Pest Control
Specify _____

Specific Interests (Order, Family, Genus) _____

If you are an authority for certain insect taxa, would you be willing to identify Wisconsin specimens for members? _____ Yes _____ No

Make checks payable to Wisconsin Entomological Society and mail to the Treasurer, Wis. Entomol. Soc., Dept. of Entomology, 237 Russell Labs., U. Wisc., Madison, Wisc. 53706 .