

# The Entomological Society of Manitoba *Newsletter*



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## About the ESM Newsletter

The Entomological Society of Manitoba Newsletter is published three times per year. It is a forum whereby information can be disseminated to Society members. As such, all members are encouraged to contribute often. The Newsletter is interested in opinions, short articles, news of research projects, meeting announcements, workshops, courses and other events, requests for materials or information, news of personnel or visiting scientists, literature reviews or announcements and anything that may be of interest to ESM members.

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## Editors' Comments

This, the first issue of Volume 36, comes to you now that summer has finally arrived. We hope you are all having a good field season in spite of the less than perfect weather. May your data prove “interesting” at the very least. In this issue we hear from our President, Richard Westwood in the **President's Report**. There's also another updated notice for **this year's joint annual meeting (JAM)** of the ESC with the ESM, which will be held here in Winnipeg in October, along with what we've called the **JAM Bulletin Board** with notices about the meeting. The first of those notices invites you to come to the Sunday afternoon session at the meeting to hear **Neil Holliday the recipient of the 2009 ESC Gold Medal!** The second notice invites you to come to the **ESM Mixer at Bob and Pat's** on the Saturday before the meeting officially starts. The third notice is a request for donations for the graduate students' **Silent Auction** fund-raiser. There is also the last call for **nominations for the Criddle Award**, to be presented at that meeting. Then we introduce you to **new student member Jonathan Veilleux**, provide happy news of a prestigious award to long-time member **Noel White**, and sad news about the deaths of **Phil Barker** and **Joseph Wanjama**. On a happier note, there's information on a significant **donation to entomology** from a former Manitoban. Once again **Bob Wrigley** regales us with another of his insect collecting expeditions: in this issue you'll find Part 3 of 3 of his 2007 exploits. Included in this issue as usual are a list of **upcoming meetings**, and a list of the **officers of your Society**. We hope you enjoy this issue of the Newsletter, and we look forward to “talking” to you again in the fall. Meanwhile, feel free to send us ideas for future items – Don't forget: this is your Newsletter!



Pat MacKay & Mahmood Iranpour

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Richard Westwood  
April, 2009

It appears that spring is finally trying to force its way into Manitoba but it has been a laborious process. The extended freeze/thaw period of March and April and subsequent flooding and ice jams have once again made Manitoba a national news maker. I suspect that the national coverage of our flood events is probably the type of attention we do not need. I live on the banks of the Red River and every year think about the many hundreds of species of insects that over winter in the soil or in soil debris. In flood events like this spring it never ceases to amaze me that eggs, larvae, nymphs and adults of a great many terrestrial insects must be submerged for long periods in the spring. Yet once the water recedes these various life stages continue to complete their development and emerge from the soil. It is also remarkable that our river bottom trees species like, elm, Manitoba maple, ash and willow can remain submerged for many weeks, often in water extending several meters up the trunk, and still leaf out in mid May apparently no worse for wear.



I have also followed with interest various media reports on plans to expand the federal and provincial control programs for the Gypsy moth, our latest invasive insect. Like Dutch elm disease which finally reached Manitoba in 1975, the arrival of the gypsy moth in our province has long been anticipated. Yet when these invasive pests finally do appear and gain a foothold it is still difficult to get used to the idea that we must now change from a watch and wait mode to the development of active management programs to minimize the negative effects.

Finally as a reminder, the date of our annual meeting with the Entomological Society of Canada in October 2009 is drawing ever closer. The ESM Executive met in April to attend to general society business and based on reports from the organizing committees we are still making good progress with the planning and preparation activities. As I stated in the previous Newsletter if anyone is still interested in becoming actively involved in the fall meeting (and has not yet let us know) please contact one of our meeting committee chairs, either Neil Holliday or Brent Elliott.

# ESM<sup>2009</sup>

Winnipeg, 18-21 October

## JOINT ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA AND THE ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF MANITOBA

Hotel Fort Garry, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Noon Sunday 18 October – Noon Wednesday 21 October 2009

On behalf of the Entomological Societies of Manitoba and Canada we are pleased to invite you to attend the 2009 Joint Annual Meeting. Registration rates are \$265/365 (early/late) for regular members, \$100/160 for student and retired members. One day registration and guest tickets for the banquet are also available.

To register, submit a paper, or get more information, go to

[http://home.cc.umanitoba.ca/~fieldspg/ESC2009\\_files/index.htm](http://home.cc.umanitoba.ca/~fieldspg/ESC2009_files/index.htm)

**The website is now open for registration and paper submissions**

### Program Highlights

#### *Plenary symposium: Climate Change: from Geology to Ecology*

- *History of glacial Lake Agassiz and climate since the last Ice Age, as reflected in lake sediments*

Dr James Teller, University of Manitoba

- *Evolution and Climate Change: potentials and pitfalls*

Dr Camille Parmesan, University of Texas

- *Future shock: invasive insects, climate change, and Canada's forest ecosystems*

Dr Shelley Hunt, University of Guelph

#### *Symposia:*

- *Apiculture: Bee - Virus Interactions*
- *Arthropod Host-symbiont Relationships: Diversity, Distribution and Ecology*
- *Assessing Trends in Forest Entomology*
- *Biological Survey of Canada Symposium: Terrestrial Arthropod Surveys in Canada: Purpose, Progress and Plans*
- *Canadian Forum on Biological Control Symposium: Putting the 'T' Back Into IPM – How To Integrate Biological Control Effectively In IPM Programs*
- *Entomological Issues in Potato Production*
- *Graduate Student Symposium*
- *Pollination Biology*
- *Protecting Urban Forests and Structures from Insects*

*Heritage lecture: History of Beekeeping Research in Western Canada.*

Donald

Dixon

*Student paper competition (presented paper and poster sessions), Poster session, Presented papers sessions*

### Important Dates

25 July 2009      *Deadline for paper submissions*  
15 August 2009      *Early registration deadline*  
15 September 2009      *Hotel booking deadline*

**2009 Gold Medalist** The Entomological Society of Canada Gold Medal for 2009 has been awarded to Professor **Neil Holliday** of the Department of Entomology, University of Manitoba. He will give the Gold Medal Address during the opening session of the meeting, on Sunday afternoon, October 18 2009, at Hotel Fort Garry. Be sure to be there!

**2009 ESM Mixer** This year, the Mixer at Pat & Bob's takes on a slightly different aspect. Instead of a Meet-the-Speakers Mixer, it's a Meet-the-Board Mixer: that's the Entomological Society of Canada Governing Board. On **Saturday October 17 2009**, before the Joint Meeting officially gets started, the Governing Board of the ESC will be at Hotel Fort Garry for their annual all-day meeting. Saturday evening, after their meeting, the Board of ESC, along with all members of ESM, are invited to Bob & Pat's to relax and share some conversation and some refreshments. Put Saturday October 17 on your calendars now: more information will be forthcoming closer to the date.

**2009 Silent Auction** **Extra Entomology Books?** The ESC student affairs committee is organizing a silent auction at the meeting in Winnipeg next October. Used books about entomology or biology topics will be sold, and the proceeds donated to the scholarship fund for the six awards for students (ESC Graduate Research Travel Scholarship, ESC Postgraduate Awards, ESC John H. Borden Scholarship, Ed Becker Conference Travel Awards, Biological Survey of Canada Scholarship, Keith Kevan Scholarship).

The auction is an important source of funds for these scholarships, and its success depends on donations. Please have a look around your office to see if there are any books you do not use any more and would be willing to donate. These can be brought to the meeting, or given to **Lars Andreassen** (Department of Entomology, University of Manitoba) to hold on to. Anything you can donate will be appreciated.

Entomological Societies of Canada & Manitoba

**ESM<sup>C</sup>2009**  
Winnipeg, 18-21 October

In 2009, the Annual Meeting of the Entomological Society of Manitoba will be held jointly with that of the Entomological Society of Canada. The meeting will be held in Winnipeg, with the scientific program running from 18–21 October 2009.

### **The 2009 Norman Criddle Award**

During the 2009 Joint Annual Meeting of ESM and ESC the Norman Criddle Award will be presented by the ESC to an amateur entomologist chosen by the ESM. The ESC website describes the award as follows:

The Society gives the Norman Criddle Award to recognize the contribution of one outstanding non-professional entomologist to the furtherance of entomology in Canada. This award may be given for outstanding work in teaching or research, community projects, publicity, popular writing, preparation of slide sets or films or any other activity that enhances the image of entomology. Candidates for the award shall preferably be amateurs or students, residing in Canada. Membership in the Entomological Society of Canada is not required. The candidate is selected by the Affiliate Society hosting the Annual Meeting.

The ESM Executive would be pleased to receive nominations from members of the Society for the 2009 Criddle Award, and will select the recipient from among the nominees. Please forward your letters of nomination, outlining the reasons for your selection, to the Secretary of the Society at the address below, to be received not later than 02 September 2009. That's less than a month from now, so you don't have much time left to think about it, so do it now! Send your nominations to:

D. Ostermann, Secretary, ESM  
Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives  
204-545 University Crescent  
Winnipeg Manitoba  
R3T 5S6

## MEMBER NEWS: Student Members

### Jonathan Veilleux

One clever observer might have seen this coming. “Seen what coming?” you are wondering. Well, studying insects! of course!

As a kid, I would spend my summer days kicking ant hills because seeing them running around, panicked, was a great show. I would look for black swallowtail caterpillars in parsley and carrots, rear them and wonder how pretty butterflies could emerge in the middle of winter. I would take care of my dad’s potatoes and lilies: finding and crushing Colorado potato beetles and red lily beetles, thinking the latter were much more interesting as they “screamed” when caught. Except for playing with ants, my favourite activity was designing Construx™ traps to catch bumblebees, yellow jackets and bald-faced hornets. Yes, I payed the price many times.



From designing insect traps, I went on to designing posters and the likes. I took graphic design at l’Université du Québec à Montréal and then found a job as a production assistant for two Montréal newspapers. As time went by, working on a computer all day and creating ugly ads for free weeklies that ended up in the garbage, this ruined it for me. I needed something new, something where I would continually learn.

Science!

I was 25 and I came to a revelation! My dad had asked me to mow the lawn. I hated it, always did, so any excuse to take a break was more than welcome. This time, the excuse was a cricket who was about to be finely chopped. I “parked” the lawnmower, took the cricket, threw it aside and carried on with my duty. Later that day, I kept wondering if saving the insect meant I was an idiot or if I had found my true calling.

I chose entomology, rented a car, drove to Winnipeg, took agroecology at the University of Manitoba, worked with the Department of Entomology for three summers, met great people, was offered to do a Master’s project with regards to an invasive bark beetle, *Scolytus schevyrewi*, that could force us to review our Dutch elm disease management strategies. Here I am today, 30 years old, still in school, but exactly where I should be and that is simply wonderful!

## **MEMBER NEWS: Awards**

### **Noel White**

Noel White, long time member of ESM, and research scientist at the Cereal Research Centre, Agriculture & AgriFood Canada, in Winnipeg, along with his collaborator from the University of Manitoba, Digvir Jayas, was awarded the 2008 Brockhouse Canada Prize for Interdisciplinary Research in Science and Engineering. The prize is named in honour of the late Canadian scientist and co-recipient of the 1994 Nobel Prize for Physics, Bertram N. Brockhouse. The prize includes a quarter of a million dollars in research funding from NSERC. Noel and Digvir met in graduate school and have been collaborating for 23 years on problems associated with grain storage. Congratulations Noel!

## **MEMBER NEWS: A Death**

### **Philip Shaw Barker, 1933-2009**

By Ian Wise and Sheila Wolfe

A dear friend and ex-colleague, Dr. Philip Barker, passed away on May 3, 2009 at the age of seventy-five. Phil was a long time honorary member of the Society. He worked for thirty years at the Agriculture Canada

Research Centre (Cereal Research Centre) in Winnipeg. His speciality was stored insect pests, with a particular affinity for mites. Phil published numerous papers on stored insect pests, but he may have saved his best for last. Forever inquisitive, Phil developed a special interest in the orange wheat blossom midge just before his retirement. His main focus was on the curious tendency by some winter wheat lines to develop short, misshapen seeds that Phil called 'tubbies'. Even more odd was the absence of any midge larvae on these wheats. What Phil discovered was an unknown genetic source of resistance right under our nose. His discovery has now led to the registration of many spring wheats with resistance to the midge, and to the future annual saving of ten of millions of dollars for wheat growers in western Canada.

But to Sheila and me, Phil was much more than his scientific achievements. He was a study of contrasts and contradictions. An Englishman who was born in Mexico and spoke impeccable Spanish. A young lad who was schooled in the old tradition of the English boarding school, not in England but in Chile and the Argentine. He was an avid rugby player as a youth who, because of his size, played American football during his early university days at Berkeley until it interfered in his studies. He was an early advocate for new fangled statistical technology, but disdained computers and preferred his treasured programmable calculator. A lover of warm weather he preferred to live in the coldest city in Canada, and could not fathom not wearing long underwear for at least six months of the year.

Some of Sheila's earliest memories of Phil are seeing him in his office listening to German marches and operas, and to classical music. The operas for Phil served a valuable function. A

brilliant linguistic, Phil had decided to learn German for Oktoberfest during his retirement to go along with his three other languages (French included). For Phil, there was no better way to learn the essence of a language than through its musical heritage. Soon after his granddaughter Cassandra was born, Phil took on the challenge of learning Chinese so he could better communicate with the parents of his daughter-in-law.

In excerpts from a letter to Phil's wife Joan, Sheila deftly described who Phil was as a person. Phil always took time to say hello and share some of his Wuerther's candy. He didn't mind not being called by his full title by a new junior technician. Phil was always the same genuine person, whether speaking to the research manager, scientists, technicians, students, and even the cleaning crew. Where possible, he loved to converse in the native language of whomever he met. He always dressed professionally in his dress pants, shirt and tie. Add a woollen sweater in the winter months, not to mention his big parka and colourful toques!

When Phil was relocated into our lab, he now had to work amongst two young female technicians. I am sure he wasn't thrilled with this new noisy arrangement but he carried on playing his music and working diligently. He liked to try and get a rise out of us "gals" and one day had brought in a column from Dear Abbey. He showed it to my cohort and asked what her thoughts on the topic were. The topic was about pre-marital relations. She, quick as a fox, replied without getting flustered that she totally agreed. Phil was shocked! This was not the 'reaction' he had expected. However, Dear Abbey had addressed two items and the second one was on whether seniors should be required to take annual driving tests as they aged, which is what she had agreed with. How Phil laughed at this. Always the contrarian, he really enjoyed teasing people and being teased also.

Phil enjoyed eating and the camaraderie of a good meal. His favourites were the family meals on Sundays and "Hamburger Night" on Thursday at A&W or Montana's. The latter tradition started when the kids were young and carried on with his grandchild. He kept a diary of the cost starting way back then, and jokingly bemoaned you could feed a family of five for what it now costs to feed two. He told stories of when the three children were small and how they loved going for milkshakes at the Dairy Queen. It was all quite ironic since Phil would often say that all ladies like to talk about is cooking and their children.

Phil relished the chance to point out the inanities of the world through the medium of comics. He especially liked Calvin and Hobbes. Then later came his "Laws of Mistakes" and "Thoughts about Fools", or the timeless words of Rudyard Kipling. Codes or more specifically the history of cryptography became a later passion. He often ordered utterly obscure books on old but not forgotten code methodology, books that no doubt in the past would warrant a visit from the cloak-and-dagger types.

His death was from complications from intestinal and liver cancer. Phil valiantly fought the disease for nearly two years. He is survived by Joan, sons Douglas (Bei) and Michael (Corinne), daughter Suzanne (David), and Cassandra.

## **OTHER ENTOMOLOGICAL NEWS: A Death**

### **Joseph Wanjama**

News reached Manitoba in February, of the death of Joseph Wanjama. Joseph was a graduate student in Entomology at the University of Manitoba, working with Neil Holliday and received his PhD in 1986. After graduating he returned to Kenya, where he worked as a research scientist at, and was later the head of the National Plant Breeding Station in Njoro, Kenya. At the time of his death, he worked in Nairobi as Director of Agriculture for Kenya.

## **OTHER ENTOMOLOGICAL NEWS: A Donor**

### **John “Allan” Garland**

John “Allan” Garland graduated from the University of Manitoba with a BSA(Hons) in 1964, and went on to obtain his MSc and PhD from MacDonald College, McGill University. He then worked for the Government of Canada in the area of inspection. As an entomologist, his group was the lacewings. Garland has donated \$40,000 to the University of Manitoba, to support summer undergraduate research students who are interested in pursuing entomology. It is his hope that this will help to increase the number of Canadian candidates qualified for positions in entomology in Canada. The entomological community in Manitoba will certainly appreciate greatly, this interest and assistance.

## **INSECT COLLECTING IN MID-WESTERN USA, July 2007**

By Robert E. Wrigley

### **Part 3 of 3 parts:**

**Editors’ Note:** For **Part 1** see the issue 35.2 of the ESM Newsletter. For **Part 2** see the issue 35.3 of the ESM Newsletter.

From July 7-25, 2007, Bob Wrigley\* and Tim Arendse\* went on an insect-collecting trip to the central United States, with the intent of re-visiting several favorite localities as well as finding some new ones. This was Tim’s first collecting trip to the USA, so he was keen for an adventure and to see new territory..... From Winnipeg, Manitoba, our collecting route took us through the following 15 states, covering both prairie and forest communities: North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Tennessee, Kentucky, Illinois, Missouri, Iowa, and Minnesota.....

In an arid Oak Forest near Brookfield, Missouri, I found a 3cm-long construction of silk and brown leaf segments attached to an oak leaf, obviously the home of some larval insect. I removed the leaf, but later, back in the motel, I noticed the case was in a different location on the leaf, and that there were additional feeding holes. Then I saw the case move -- a bagworm moth

(*Thyridopteryx ephemeraeformis*) -- a significant defoliating species of many kinds of trees. I learned that the female is flightless and attracts males by releasing pheromones. After mating, she lays up to 1000 eggs, which over-winter inside the camouflaged bag, surrounded by her now-mummified body. Both bag and leaf were preserved.

Near Mexico, Missouri, we found a lush habitat along a railroad track with rich growths of milkweed and dogbane, and collected 25 Milkweed Borers (*Tetraopes femoratus?*), 2 Dogbane Leaf Beetles (*Chrysochus auratus*), and a fine series of dragonflies and butterflies. Interesting how every site has a different selection of insects and spiders, even if they appear similar. We paid the price of leg lacerations from sharp leaves and vines, and thousands of sharp seeds imbedded into our socks and ankles.

One of the most-pleasant habitats was a majestic old-growth deciduous forest on steep hillsides at Wolf Lake (on the Trail of Tears), Union County, Illinois. It elicited images of what the original deciduous forests looked like before deforestation and chestnut blight. Butterflies flitted along and across the path in a truly magical sun-lit setting -- a blissful scene broken only by watching Tim take off after a swallowtail, with his butterfly net poised, while still talking to his girlfriend on his cell phone. Remarkably he succeeded at both activities (the younger generation!). We gathered a nice series of Eastern Tiger (*Papilio glaucus*), Pipevine (*Battus philenor*), and Zebra (*Eurytides marcellus*) swallowtails. I will leave accounts of butterflies, moths, dragonflies and spiders (some quite large) for another chapter, with Tim's input.

While some environmental situations (e.g., flood or severe drought) helped explain why insects were abundant, common, rare, or absent in certain areas, many other cases left us baffled. So many factors (e.g., weather conditions, low-population year, shift in phenology, etc.) could potentially be involved, that we had to admit we just did not know the reason most of the time. All we could conclude was that the warmer the weather, the more active was insect life, both night and day. Our collecting efforts in northern Louisiana and Mississippi were frustrated, in spite of the lush vegetation both in and outside towns. While plenty of insects set up a loud chorus in the deep forests at night, few showed up at lights, or were found in usual sites on the ground. Likely had we had more time, we would have found some good locations. We had hoped to connect up with Don Henne (University of Manitoba grad now at Baton Rouge), but time was not on our side. At New Boston, Texas, weeks of heavy rains left the ground saturated, and we found thousands of scarabs and other beetles dead on the surface. It appeared that the weeks of heavy rains had knocked the insects from their resting places and they had drowned. Collecting of live insects was again disappointing. It was also obvious, while approaching northern latitudes on the return trip home (e.g., Minnesota, North Dakota) that abundance and diversity of species plummeted as we left behind the distributions of many interesting southern species.

At the other end of the spectrum, several localities proved exceptional, sometimes for the second or third year in a row. At localities in Missouri, Oklahoma and Arkansas, it was not unusual for the two of us to accumulate over 300 specimens (while being selective) of 60 species in a 24-hour period. For example, one white wall of a building and the sidewalk, right in the centre of Stuttgart, Arkansas, was covered in many thousands of carabids, hydrophilids, and dozens of other kinds of insects. We took pictures to show how the wall was littered with live insects at

night. Our tally for this town consisted of a 4cm prionine longhorn, 48 Pan-American Big-headed Tiger Beetles, 20 shiny-black *Hydrophilus trianglaris*, and 25 other species of beetles, grasshoppers, cicadas, and true bugs.

Possoms, coons, armadillos, feral cats, and bats were our fellow-mammalian competitors for bugs at night, and we suspect they had a distinct advantage over us, with keener noses, echo-locational ability, and intimate knowledge of the habitat and terrain. Frogs and toads, some of grotesque dimensions, were also cleaning up before we arrived. Their 25mm black droppings were seen everywhere on their territories, often chucked full of undigested colorful elytra of the very prized specimens we were seeking (e.g., *Calosoma scrutator*).

Occasionally we found ourselves in uncomfortable circumstances. Guard dogs were always quick to angrily announce our after-dark approach, and we sometimes wondered whether they were tied up (We are both fast runners and good climbers!). At Vicksburg, Mississippi, I pulled the car into a somewhat-darkened carwash, and we began checking for beetles before we realized there were a number of people hanging around cars in the shadows of the parking lot. We suddenly had the uncomfortable feeling a drug deal was going down, so we left the premises pretty fast. On the other hand, we were also suspicious-looking characters, circling around banks, liquor stores and schools at 1 AM, checking the walls and windows (for bugs) with headlamps and flashlights. As is usual on such trips, we occasionally attracted the attention of local police, and were even checked out once (licenses demanded and searched on their computer system). I had experienced police questioning many times before, but for young Tim, it was really unsettling. I suppose entomologists appear harmless or elicit sympathy, because the attending officers were generally courteous and friendly, especially when informed that we had come all the way from Canada to remove some of their bugs. It just isn't feasible to inform the police department of our intentions at every location we visit. None of our encounters was as scary as the one told to me by my collecting buddy Todd Lawton, who was confronted by a couple of irate deer hunters on an ATV in the back-woods of Louisiana. Todd described them as; "not having a whole set of teeth between the two of them!" I am encouraging him to contribute his remarkable collecting stories to this newsletter.

Driving through Oklahoma and Kansas, we were only too aware of being in 'tornado alley.' In years past, we occasionally found ourselves within the dangerous 'red zone,' while staying overnight in a flimsy motel (not conducive to a good-nights sleep!). In a number of places on this trip, we observed trees with all branches under 20cm diameter ripped off, leaving the trunks either dead, or with a replacement of leaves. We planned to stop for gas in Greensburg, Kansas, and as we coasted into town we were shocked to see utter disaster. Over 95% of the town was damaged, and half the town (50 blocks, including down-town) was gone, leaving only a concrete grain elevator standing, and 6-metre-high piles of bricks and other building debris where houses had been standing. Even basements were missing, just square gaping holes in the ground. Phoning my wife at home, I learned from her internet report that a 1.7-mile-wide, category-F5 enhanced tornado, with 205 mph winds, had struck on the night of May 4, killing 9 people and leaving 16 critically injured. How hundreds were not killed is a miracle. Workers were still cleaning up the devastation, part of a multi-million dollar rebuilding-assistance program provided by the Federal Government. President Bush had come to commiserate with the survivors. Few of us in North America are used to witnessing major calamities

It was a sad and truly sobering experience, as we recalled the category-F4 tornado that struck Elie, Manitoba on June 22, a few days before we left on our trip. Actually, the weather on the entire trip was better than could be expected, with no tornadoes, which was surprising considering the collision of several northern cold fronts with hot and humid Gulf air masses. In fact, it was often rather cooler (19C) in the evenings than we would have liked (reducing insect activity). The worst storm hit us back in Winnipeg at the exact moment we were unloading our gear from the rental car.

Over the past few years, my bug travels had led me to many localities where significant events took place during the Civil War (1861-65); the park and interpretive Centre at Fort Donelson, on the Tennessee River in Tennessee, was one of the more impressive. Major battles took place here in 1862 (17,398 casualties), and miles of earthen bunkers were still evident, coursing through the mature forest. The Confederates installed huge canons overlooking the river, which fired 12-inch-diameter iron balls each weighing 100 pounds. These canon remain in good condition on the hilltops to this day. Their targets were the ironclad gunboat ships of the Union forces -- literally floating tanks with inclined sides to deflect incoming canon balls. An exhibit revealed the ships' armor of 4-inch steel, backed by 20 inches of oak. General Ulysses S. Grant succeeded in capturing the 12,000-men garrison in the Fort -- the first great Union victory, which opened up the South to invasion by northern armies via the Tennessee and Mississippi rivers. It firmly established Grant as a hero and the new Union commander. We purchased books on the War, and a replica of the first Confederate Flag -- the one with 7 stars. (I collect flags and fly them in my backyard.) Such experiences add a sense of place, and of stepping back into time to glimpse of what it was like to be there so long ago. The feeling is the same when viewing a First Nations archeological site. The United States does such a wonderful job interpreting its natural and historical treasures.

Field naturalists can appreciate the exhilaration of each day's explorations, with keen anticipation of discovering new habitats and wonderful wildlife species. To help pass the long hours of driving to these special locations, we jotted down amusing anecdotes, and here are some of our favorites. A sign announced the "Flippin Church of Christ" in Flippin, Tennessee. I had poor luck during this trip finding cappuccino bars in the Deep South, and so I was ecstatic to see a big sign one morning, which read "Jehovah Java Café" in Mississippi; can you believe it was closed because it was Sunday? Presumably they served all denominations and atheists. The number of churches (especially Baptist) in some states had to have outnumbered their insect fauna, and some were even located in remote cornfields. One service station radio ad began with: "Now I've known a lot of gasholes in my time..." We enjoyed being greeted with a friendly; "Y'all doin'?" on entering restaurants. Everyone was so friendly.

How we arrived home without adding extra body weight was amazing, considering the giant portions in American restaurants, but we actually lost a few kilos -- all that walking, bending, swinging, climbing fences, chopping open logs, and fighting our way through heavy brush, up steep slopes, and over boulder fields. We can still remember our first crayfish chowder and hush puppies (deep-fried corn balls), mounds of wonderful all-you-can-eat pond-raised catfish, flavorful beans of every color and size, sweet potato and ochre, 3cm-thick New York steaks, and foot-long Alaskan crab legs; we didn't try the bright-red crawdads and frogs legs at the buffet

table. Southern fried chicken was not the only item to hit the hot oil (e.g., “chicken-fried steak”). My favorites -- Waffle House pecan waffles, Mexican and Chinese restaurants, and ice cream parlors -- kept us going on the road. Tim made an astute observation, noting the inordinately wide space between the booth bench and table in restaurants – evidence of patrons’ mighty midsections. We were, after all, in America’s ‘heartland of the heavy.’

It wasn’t all enjoyment however. While concentrating on extracting some beetles from a sweep net, I inadvertently (but not for the first time) stood on a nest of the Fire Ant (*Solenopsis invicta*), native to Brazil. Before I became aware of the mounting invasion, dozens of these tiny ants had climbed up my legs and commenced attaching themselves onto my tender parts. The tiny buggers could really bite and hold on while they employed their stingers to inject a mixture of piperidine alkaloids (felt worse than it sound!). The next day, white pimples marked the spot of every sting. As in past years, our legs were a sorry sight of stings, bites, cuts, bruises, greenbrier tears, and poison ivy sores, and in fact it was a little embarrassing to enter restaurants and stores with shorts on. But what are a little blood and testing of our immune and healing capabilities when one is catching great stuff? Now it is time to prepare and label the specimens, and confirm identifications of about 5,000 specimens. The multitude of carabids is always the most daunting to determine, and we will have to rely on the experts for some of them. With our progressing experience and mounting collection of insect books and keys, it is gratifying to be able to place the correct names on most specimens. As in the past, representative series will be donated to the J.B. Wallis Museum of Entomology at the University of Manitoba. Vacation is over, and now it’s back to work. But it’s not too early to begin recruiting and planning for next year’s trips. The deserts and mountains of Arizona sound promising, or perhaps the wonderfully oppressive heat and humidity of Florida in July.

Oh, and one last note of entomological interest. We both landed a copy of the massive, new, two-volume set of Gary Larson’s “The Complete Far Side (1980-1994),” which contains so many hilarious cartoons about insects, people, and other animals.

*\*Dr. Bob Wrigley is an animal ecologist (and former Director of the Manitoba Museum, and Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre) and currently the Curator at the Assiniboine Park Zoo in Winnipeg. Tim Arendse is a keen amateur coleopterist and member of a successful farming business near Portage La Prairie. He has just started a new website called The Bug Hunter.*

## **MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS\***

### **1<sup>st</sup> International Entomophagous Insects Conference**

Minneapolis, Minnesota, 27-31 July 2009

### **Joint Annual Meeting of the Entomological Societies of Canada and Manitoba**

Winnipeg, MB, 18-21 October 2009

Contact: Brent Elliott, [Brent.Elliott@gov.mb.ca](mailto:Brent.Elliott@gov.mb.ca)

<http://home.cc.umanitoba.ca/~fieldspg/ESC2009.html>

### **57<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Entomological Society of America**

Indianapolis, Indiana, 13-16 December 2009

<http://www.entsoc.org/am/fm/2009/index.htm>

### **Joint Annual Meeting of the Entomological Societies of Canada and B.C.**

Vancouver, B.C., 31 October-03 November 2010

### **58<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Entomological Society of America**

San Diego, California, 13-16 December 2010

<http://www.entsoc.org/am/fm/index.htm>

### **Joint Annual Meeting of the Canadian and Acadian Entomological Societies**

Halifax, N.S., 2011

\*If you have a meeting you would like listed in the next ESM Newsletter, contact the editors with the details by September 2009

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