



April 2006

## Faculty News

Dr. **James Ellis**, currently doing post-doctoral work at the University of Georgia, accepted the **Apiculture/Youth Programs** position that we interviewed candidates for in February. He is expected to join us sometimes this summer.

Dr. **Miguel Angel Morón** is a visiting scientist at the Florida State Collection of Arthropods, sponsored by the Center for Systematic Entomology. He was here for two weeks, working with Dr. **R.E. Woodruff**, describing several new species of May or June Beetles (Phyllophaga) from Mexico and Central America. He has published several major books and hundreds of papers on Scarabaeidae.

Thanks to the efforts of our IPM Florida group and predecessors, Dr. **Norm Leppla** received the 2006 Entomological Society of America Award for Excellence in Integrated Pest Management at the annual meeting of the Southeastern Branch of the Entomological Society of America at Wilmington, North Carolina on 7 March. Leppla was honored for leading the UF/IFAS statewide IPM program that is part of the Entomology and Nematology Department. This 5-year-old IPM program has the mission, "IPM Florida provides statewide, interdisciplinary and inter-unit coordination and assistance in integrated pest management

to protect agriculture, communities and the environment." An IPM program of this scope, magnitude and quality would not be possible without the continued support of the Entomology and Nematology Department faculty and staff.

The President of the Entomological Society of America (ESA) appointed Dr. **Pauline Lawrence** to a three-year term to represent the Society at the Biological Sciences Section (BSS) of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). She will report on the activities of the AAAS/BSS to the ESA Governing Board. Dr. Lawrence was elected by the membership of the AAAS to the Committee on Nominations of that society for a two-year term.

Dr. **Marc Branham** recently served on a National Science Foundation grants advisory panel for three days at NSF in Arlington, VA.

Dr. **Marc Branham** is pleased to announce the premiere of his lab's Web site at <http://www.BranhamLab.com/>. The site covers the work he and his graduate students are involved in and contains a large number of photographs from their trips around the world. Also included are summaries of their work, publications, contact information, and curriculum vitae for each of them.

## Staff News

**Sonja Swiger** worked for our business office over five years. On 28 March, she received a goodbye party and baby shower in her honor. Sonja, who is also a graduate student, will continue to work on her Ph.D. in forensic entomology; she just will not be employed by the department.

**Lois Wood**, Senior Biological Scientist, attended the two-week Advanced Mosquito Identification and Certification Course at the Florida Medical Entomology Laboratory in Vero Beach, during 13-24 March 2006. Dr. The Richard Darsie, Jr., a world renown mosquito expert, was head instructor. Lois passed the exams and now has mosquito-identifier certification.

## Student News

The following undergraduate entomology students were named to the Dean's List for the Fall 2005 semester: **Jessica Awad, Meredith Cenzer, Kimberly Jameson, Valerie McManus, Daniel Pitt, Samantha Riesterer, Norisse Tellman, and Natasha Wright**. We are proud to have them as majors. Keep up the good work. - Dr. **Carl Barfield**, Undergraduate Coordinator

**Kaytora Long** graduated from UF in December 2005, with a B.S. in Animal Science. However, she is a long time OPS employee in Dr. **Oscar Liburd**'s lab. **Jay Cee Turner** designed a project for Kaytora to look at the rate of oviposition, survival and mortality of *Geocoris punctipes* on three mediums called "Evaluation of various mediums for rearing big-eyed bugs, *Geocoris punctipes* (Say) a beneficial predator for controlling insect pest populations." The three mediums evaluated in this project

included cotton balls, cotton squares, and polyester/rayon gauze. Kaytora was selected as a profiled scholar for the Journal of Undergraduate Research for the University Scholars Program. See <http://www.clas.ufl.edu/jur/200603/profiles/long.html>.

Graduate student **Jennifer Zaspel**, of Dr. **Marc Branham**'s lab, was awarded a Vam C. York Graduate Scholarship (\$500) recently. This scholarship provides financial assistance to female graduate students within the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.

Welcome **Margaret Schwinghammer**, a Ph.D. student at Purdue University, who is a visiting scholar during April-July, 2006. Margaret is working on foraging and trail-following behavior in *Reticulitermes* termites — in particular, the role of a gene called "takeout" in regulating these processes. Margaret is Dr. Gary Bennett's student at Purdue University. At UF, she will be located in Dr. **Mike Scharf**'s laboratory.

**Emily Saarinen** successfully completed her Ph.D. qualifying exams.

Graduate student **Luis Matos** was selected for a fellowship in the Science Partners in Inquiry-base Collaborative Education (SPICE) program (<http://spice.ees.ufl.edu/>). The primary goals of SPICE are to: (1) enrich the education of graduate students and (2) encourage underprivileged students to pursue careers in Science.

Ms. **Anchana Thancharoen**, a doctoral student from Mahidol University, Thailand, is spending seven months in Dr. **Marc Branham**'s lab studying the effects of light pollution on the firefly *Photinus collustrans*. The data she collects from this Florida

species will be compared to a firefly species she is studying in Thailand with the ultimate goal being the conservation of firefly species in Thailand. Ms. Thancharoen's research is funded through a Royal Golden Jubilee Scholarship.

## Alumni News

Dr. **Dini Miller** was interviewed as a bed bug expert for articles on the Microsoft Network. Since receiving her Ph.D. here, Dini has been the urban entomologist at Virginia Tech University. To read her comments and see a photograph, visit <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/11823244/>. For details on the bed bug, see [http://creatures.ifas.ufl.edu/urban/bed\\_bug.htm](http://creatures.ifas.ufl.edu/urban/bed_bug.htm).

## Seminar Series - Spring 2006

This semester's seminar coordinators are **Seth Bybee, James Dunford, Luis Matos, Murugesan Rangasamy** and **Jennifer Zaspel**. Seminars begin at 3:45 p.m. in room 1031, Entomology and Nematology (Bldg. 970). A listing of the topics and speakers is in the January 2006 issue, available online at <http://entnews.ifas.ufl.edu/>.

## McGuire Center Seminars

Seminars are held Tuesdays in room 233 on the second floor. Lunch is served at noon and the seminar begins at 12:15. April's seminars are listed at <http://life.ifas.ufl.edu/2006/0331/LIFEMcGuiresked.html>.

## Publications

**Zhou X, Oi FM, Scharf ME**. 2006. Social exploitation of hexamerin: RNAi reveals a major caste-regulatory factor in termites.

Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA 103: 4499-4504. [Special thanks to **Lyle Buss** for some excellent termite photos included in this publication.]

**Gyeltshen J, Hodges AC**. (March 2006). Viburnum leaf beetle, *Pyrrhalta viburni* (Paykull) . *UF/IFAS Featured Creatures*. EENY-366. [http://creatures.ifas.ufl.edu/orn/beetles/viburnum\\_leaf\\_beetle.htm](http://creatures.ifas.ufl.edu/orn/beetles/viburnum_leaf_beetle.htm)

**Saarinen EV, Daniels JC**. 2006. Miami blue butterfly larvae (Lepidoptera: Lycaenidae) and ants (Hymenoptera: Formicidae): New information on the symbionts of an endangered taxon. *Florida Entomologist* 89:69-74.

**Zaspel JM, Weller SJ**. 2006. Review of generic limits of the tiger moth genera *Virbia* Walker and *Holomelina* Herrich-Schäffer (Lepidoptera: Arctiidae: Arctiinae) and their biogeography. *Zootaxa* 1159: 1-68.

**Nearns EH, Steiner WE**. 2006. A new species of *Plectromerus* Haldeman (Coleoptera: Cerambycidae) from Navassa Island, Greater Antilles. *Zootaxa* 1163: 61-68.

**Buss LB, Fasulo TR**. 2006. Stored Product Pests. UF/IFAS. SW 185. CD-ROM.

**Dunford JC, Young DK, Krauth SJ**. 2006. *Stethobaris ovata* (LeConte) (Curculionidae) on eastern prairie fringed orchid [*Platanthera leucophaea* (Nuttall) Lindley] in Wisconsin. *The Coleopterists Bulletin* 60: 51-52.

## Meetings and Presentations

Dr. **Julio Medal** was invited to give a talk on "Biological Control of Tropical Soda Apple

in Florida: A Research Update” at the Ministry of Agriculture in San Jose, Costa Rica. Medal also did field explorations for three weeks searching for natural enemies of wetland nightshade (WLNS), *Solanum tampicense*, in Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. Fifteen insect species were found feeding on WLNS in Guatemala and Costa Rica. Of these, at least seven (including four weevils) may have potential as biocontrol agents of WLNS. Preliminary host-specificity testing are currently underway by researcher collaborators in Guatemala and Costa Rica.

Dr. **Julio Medal** is organizing the Third Latin-American Short-Course on Biological Control of Weeds to be held 12-15 June 2006, at the Seminole Plaza Hotel in Managua, Nicaragua. Participants will gain a basic understanding of the principles and concepts of biological control of weeds using insects and pathogens, and will receive training in how to implement a weed biocontrol program. Group discussions will focus on the prospects for and limitations of biological weed control in Latin America. About 15 weed biocontrol experts and 100 trainees from at least 15 developing countries will be involved. Information and registration are at <http://www.biocontrol.ifas.ufl.edu/>.

Dr. **Oscar Liburd** and graduate student **H. Alejandro Arevalo** presented at the Florida Blueberry Growers Association's Spring Blueberry Field Day. The meeting was on 7 March. Dr. Liburd's talk was "Management of key insect pests and mites in blueberries using conventional and reduced-risk insecticides." Alejandro's was, "Advances in understanding the relationship between flower thrips and blueberries in Florida."

Dr. **Oscar Liburd** attended the Organic Blueberry Working Group Organizational Meeting on 17 March Alma, GA. The attendees at this meeting discussed needs for research, extension support, and infrastructure that would facilitate continued development of organic blueberry production in Georgia.

Dr. **Oscar Liburd** attended the LEAD IFAS Session 2 at Haines City, FL, during 20-22 March, 2006.

Graduate students **Alejandro Arevalo**, **Craig Roubos**, **Elena Rhodes**, **Aimee Fraulo**, **Teresia Nyoike**, and biological scientist **Jay Cee Turner** attended the in-service training and workshop updates on High Risk Plant Diseases and Hemipteran Pests of Concern to Florida on 14 March. **Elena Rhodes** continued with the meeting during 15-16 March. The workshop was held in the Department. The workshop focused on pests, diagnostics, epidemiology, and management topics.

Graduate student **Alejandro Arvalo** attended the Thrips Sampling and Identification Workshop from 15-17 March. The workshop was held in the department. The program focused on sampling procedures for thrips on crops and other plant hosts; plus identification of thrips to family, genus, and species.

Dr. **Mike Scharf** attended the annual meeting of the Consortium for Plant Biotechnology Research, held in Washington DC. Dr. Scharf presented a proposal at the meeting (with Co-PIs Dr. **Faith Oi** and **Drion Boucias**) titled "Genomic dissection of cellulose utilization in termites".

Dr. **Phil Kaufman**, Don Rutz and Kathy Murray presented the paper "Insecticide resistance in lesser mealworms collected from poultry facilities" at the SEB-ESA meeting in Wilmington, NC. 5-8 March.

Dr. **Norm Leppla** presented the keynote address, "IPM's Time has Arrived!" at the 40th Annual Conference of the Association of Applied IPM Ecologists in Oxnard, CA on 5-7 February 5-7. Leppla was also asked to deliver two additional talks on UF/IFAS projects, "Increasing Adoption of IPM in the Production of Woody Ornamentals" and "Opportunities for Biocontrol in Greenhouses." The theme of the conference was "40 Years of Making a Difference."

At the 5th National IPM Symposium held in St. Louis, MO, 4-6 April, Drs **Norm Leppla and Jennifer Gillett** were co-authors of a poster "IPM Florida Partnerships: The UF, IFAS Statewide IPM. In addition, co-authors Dr. **Rebecca Baldwin**, Dr. **Faith Oi**, M. Lame, E. Lewellan, **R. Smith**, **S. Scalera**, Dr. **Norm Leppla**, and Dr. **Jennifer Gillett** presented the poster "A Model for School IPM in Florida."

Graduate student **Seth Bybee** represented the Entomology & Nematology Department at the sixth annual IFAS College of Agricultural and Life Sciences graduate research symposium on 24 March, with a presentation titled "Toward a Phylogeny of Holodonta: getting down and dirty with the fossil record and missing data."

**Dr. Marc Branham** gave the invited talk "Using Phylogeny to Study the Evolution of Behavior in Insects: Examples from Fireflies and Vampire Moths" in the Biodiversity Research and Systematics Symposium, at the Entomological Society of America -

Southeastern Branch Conference, Wilmington, N.C..

## Grants

Drs. **Julio Medal** and **James Cuda** were awarded a grant for \$180,000 from the USDA-APHIS to continue the "Implementation of Biological Control of Tropical Soda Apple" in 2006. Field releases in Florida of the leaf-beetle *Gratiana boliviana* from South America began in the summer 2003, and approximately 45,000 beetles have been released in Florida, Georgia, Alabama and South Carolina in collaboration with FDACS-Division of Plant Industry & Forestry Division, and USDA-APHIS & ARS.

Dr. **Julio Medal** received a grant for \$3,000 from The Academy of Sciences for the Developing World for the "Organization of the III Latin American Short-Course on Weed Biological Control" to be held in Managua, Nicaragua from 12-15 June 2006.

Dr. **David Williams** gave the Keynote Address at the 2006 Imported Fire Ant Conference in Mobile, AL. His talk was "A Brief History of the Red Imported Fire Ant in the United States."

## Really Small Important Stuff

Drs. **Jim Maruniak** and **Ale Garcia-Maruniak** announce ENY 6822C - **Molecular biology techniques of invertebrates and their pathogens**, a hands-on laboratory course during Summer A 2006 (15 May - 23 June). It targets Entomology and Nematology graduate students interested in learning, understanding and applying molecular biology techniques for their own

research projects. **Credits:** 4; **Prerequisites:** Any basic course in genetics, biochemistry or molecular biology. Enrollment limited to 8 students. Contact either instructor at 392-1901, ext. 203 or 148.

Students will extract DNA from their organism of interest and it will be used for further experiments. Some of the techniques taught will include PCR, RFLP, microsatellite analysis, sequencing and bioinformatics. Maintenance of an adequate laboratory notebook, oral presentation of a project using the techniques learned, attendance and active participation in every aspect of the course will be the major criteria for grades. Classes held Monday through Friday, 8:00 - noon (1<sup>st</sup> through 3<sup>rd</sup> period), in room 3130 (Insect Virology Lab), Bldg 970. The course will not be offered again until Summer 2008.

### **Why Not The Average Antilles?**

In mid-February, Dr. **Marc Branham** and graduate students **Gino Nearn** and **Seth Bybee** returned to Cuba for a week of collections-based research. They traveled on a U.S. State Department License that allows UF staff and graduate students to visit Cuba to conduct research. The Branham Lab is generally interested in the biogeography of the Caribbean (both the Greater and Lesser Antilles). Due to its large area and location very near to Florida, Cuba is perhaps the most important Caribbean island in terms of the insect fauna found in Florida. The site includes the only known photograph of Dr. Branham puffing on a cigar.

### **LIFE in the Department**

The March 31st issue covers classifying stuff, the Thrips Sampling and ID Workshop,

our Cuban connection, and How Not To Submit Bugs For Identification.

The March 17th issue covers scary campsites, fruit and vegetable IPM, lobate lac scales, and German nematologists.

**Mike Sanford** edits this photographic journal of our department, located at <http://life.ifas.ufl.edu/LIFEhomepage.html>.

### **“Busy as a Bee” Web Site**

Whether it be a pest, beneficial or just a part of the natural diversity, if you are looking for some more exposure for your favorite arthropod then you might want to add it to the Featured Creatures Web site. I will not list the names here, but entomology faculty from a number of universities, with large extension components and significant presence on the Web, have told me over the years that when an arthropod is included in Featured Creatures they usually refer their clients to our site.

When you do a Featured Creatures, you get “two-for-one.” Once a Featured Creatures publication is completed it is also converted into an EDIS publication by **Glinda Burnett**. In addition, updates to existing Featured Creatures, and we spend as much time updating Featured Creatures as we do creating new ones, are also forwarded to Glinda so she can update the EDIS copies. The continual updating of Featured Creatures is one of the reasons for its popularity. Much of the information is “current,” with individual files listing the revision dates. Whereas, many other sources of arthropod information on the Web have not been touched since they were first created.

During the last 12 months, the Featured Creatures Web site recorded 2,218,949 distinct visitors and 3,887,480 page views. See <http://creatures.ifas.ufl.edu/>. - **Thomas R. Fasulo**

### **Old-Fashioned Pest Control**

Sometimes old-fashioned pest control, literally smashing the bug, is not a good idea, as one person found out. Robert Colla was teaching students at an adult education class when he picked up a paperweight and slammed it down on a “bug” crossing his desk. The paperweight, a 40 mm shell, exploded and severed his right hand, as well as causing other injuries. See <http://www.cnn.com/2006/US/04/04/paperweight.expllosion.ap/>.

### **FES Meeting**

Dr. **Rudi Scheffrahn**, president of the **Florida Entomological Society**, reports that the 2006 meeting is scheduled for 23-26 July, at the Jupiter Beach Resort in Jupiter, Florida. For more information on this and the 2007 meeting, see <http://www.flaentsoc.org/fes06v1.pdf>.

### **Bug Quote**

What do you suppose?  
A bee sat on my nose.  
Then what do you think?  
He gave me a wink  
And said, "I beg your pardon,  
I thought you were the garden."

- old English rhyme

### **Newsletter Minutia**

**Thomas Fasulo** is the newsletter editor. You can send news to him at **fasulo@ufl.edu**. Issues are published the middle of each month. Submit items for an issue by the 7<sup>th</sup> of that month.

Printed copies are distributed only within Building 970. **UF-Bugnews-L** listserv subscribers receive notices when HTML and PDF copies are posted on the newsletter Web site at <http://entnews.ifas.ufl.edu/>, which has instructions for subscribing and unsubscribing. **Pam Howell** and **Nancy Sanders** review the newsletter for errors and prepare the print version for distribution.

During the last 12 months, the newsletter Web site recorded 45,352 distinct visitors and 80,483 page views. In addition, visitors downloaded 1,735 PDF files during January-March 2006.