The Department of Entomology has undergone many changes since our last newsletter in Fall 2008. From March to September of 2009 I was asked to take on the position of Interim Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences following the departure of Dean Sharron Quisenberry. Thus, there has been a lapse in our annual newsletter for Fall 2009.

I am very happy to report that we were two years ahead of schedule in reaching our target graduate enrollment of 40 by the fall of 2009. However, with the budget reductions that started in 2009, we have lost four senior Faculty members. Three retired in 2010, and we have recently hired a new faculty in toxicology/neurophysiology to fill vacancy left by Jeff Bloomquist. At the start of the 2010/11 academic year, we had a total graduate student enrollment of 49 consisting of 23 Ph.D, 16 MS and 10 Online MS students, despite the net loss of these faculty members. That this was viable was largely due to the prodigious ability of our faculty to generate external funding for student support in their programs. Research expenditures continued to rise and currently exceed three million dollars per year. Percentage growth of actual research expenditures since 2004 has more than doubled.

During the past two academic years, we graduated 5 Ph.D. and 3 M.S. students in 2009, and 3 Ph.D. and 5 M.S. students in 2010. Our faculty and staff continue to serve the Commonwealth in all three missions of a land grant university: Research, Teaching, and Extension. Once again, several of our faculty/staff received alumni, professional societies, and college research and extension awards. Our students were equally successful in being recognized by awards at conferences of our professional meetings.

Since we are located in seven different buildings: Price, Latham, Fralin, Agnew, Dodson Lab, Insectary, and Prices Fork, maintaining a cohesive and enriching experience for our students, faculty and staff continues to be an obstacle.

Despite the challenging times of budget reductions, we continue to be optimistic about our future. Our department had a very successful celebration of its Golden Jubilee on 27/28 March 2009. We were gratified to see a large number of alumni return to be reconnected at our celebration, including alumni that graduated in the fifties. All the successes the Department has achieved would not have been possible without the strong support of our conscientious and dedicated staff, students and faculty.

I would like to express my grateful thanks to those alumni/alumnae and friends for their continued generous donations to the Department. We extend our standing invitation to all our alumni/alumnae, and emeriti faculty to keep in contact with us and to visit us whenever they are in the area.

L. T. Kok
Professor and Department Head
Golden Jubilee

The Department held its 50th Anniversary March 27, 28, 2009. The celebration included a reception at the University Club, a symposium, campus tours, local activities and a banquet at The Inn at Virginia Tech. The Golden Jubilee Celebration was dedicated to Dr. James McD. Grayson who was the guiding force behind the establishment of the Department of Entomology in 1959 and led the department successfully through its first twenty years. Dr. Grayson’s wife, Margaret, and daughters, Nancy and Betty, were present to receive the acknowledgement.

One hundred eight persons, including 28 alumni and 17 of their guests attended the reception and 151 persons including 35 alumni and 22 of their guests attended the banquet. Graduates from the early years who attended the celebration included Don Cochran (MS 1952), Averett Tombes (M.S. 1956), Louie Hargett (MS 1958) and Bill Campbell (MS 1965).

The symposium “Past and Future Perspectives: The Contributions of Entomology to World Economies” included presentations from five of our alumni: Michael Parrella (M.S. 1977; Ph.D. 1980), John Thomas (M.S. 1976), Jarrod Leland (M.S. 1998; Ph.D. 2001), Wayne Surles (M.S. 1972; Ph.D. 1976), and Ren Wang (Ph.D. 1985). The symposium was followed by a panel discussion on “Current Faculty Programs: Contributions to the Commonwealth and the World”; the panelists were: Jeff Bloomquist, Peter Schultz, Paul Sémtnr, Doug Pfeiffer, Ames Herbert, and Chris Bergh, with Rick Fell presiding.

Two special mementos of the celebration were given to the guests: a special edition of the Golden Jubilee Commemoration CD, which contained the dedication to Dr. Grayson, a historical list of departmental faculty, former and current graduate students, research histories of some of our retired faculty and current research programs; and a DVD containing a video entitled “A Brief History of Teaching in Entomology at Virginia Tech” which was presented by Dr. Grayson in January 1987, twenty years after he retired.

Electronic copies of the Golden Jubilee program, the Golden Jubilee Entomologist and the History of Entomology at Virginia Tech as well as Departmental pictures may be obtained at:


There are still a few DVD’s of Dr. Grayson’s presentation available. If you would like to receive one, please contact Don Mullins mullinsd@vt.edu

A photo album of the Golden Jubilee events can be found at:

http://maxpond.ext.vt.edu/gallery_sites/entomology/main.php
In September 2010, the Entomology Department was one of three departments to receive the University Exemplary Department Award. The Department was recognized for its work in developing and sustaining international awareness and education. We used this monetary award to upgrade the communications system in the Grayson Library. There was a ceremony to present the award to the Department that was attended by many in the department. The other two departments to receive the 2010 award were departments in the College of Engineering.

Awards and Honors

Tim Jordan was awarded the 2008 Hokie Spirit Award on October 30, 2008.

Meredith Cassell placed 1st in the Poster Session at the Entomological Society of America National meeting held November 16-19, 2008 in Reno, Nevada.

Daniel Frank placed 2nd in the Poster Session at the Entomological Society of America National meeting held November 16-19, 2008 in Reno, Nevada.

Preston Brown received $500 for the Entomological Society of America (ESA) Student Certification Award. This award recognizes outstanding graduate students in Entomology interested in promoting the mission of the ESA certification program.

Kevin Myles served as a member of the October 2008 National Science Foundation Advisory Panel on Symbiosis Defense and Self-Recognition.

In January 2009, Amanda Koppel and Meredith Cassell won $1000 Virginia Crop Production Association Ph.D. scholarship awards.

Spring 2009, Jeff Bloomquist was recognized as “Fralin Life Science Senior Faculty Fellow”. As a result, he received a plaque and $10,000 for his research.

For the year 2009, we wish to recognize the following people for their years of service to Virginia Tech: Don Mullins and Pete Schultz, 35 years; Rick Fell and Diane Linkous, 30 years; Rod Youngman and Kathy Shelor, 20 years; and Carlyle Brewster, 10 years.
Scott Salom received the 2009 A.D. Hopkins Award sponsored by the Southern Forest Insect Work Conference. This award is presented to an individual with an outstanding work record to Southern Forest entomology. Also, Scott presented the A.D. Hopkins Award talk at the 53rd annual Southern Forest Insect Work Conference in Wilmington, NC, July 20-23, 2010.

Mike Weaver won the 2009 Swiger Award in The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences for Excellence in teaching, research, or extension that improve the quality of life for Virginians or benefit the agriculture industry.

Dini Miller won the 2009 Crown Leadership Award given by the National Pest Management Association and sponsored by The Pest Control Technology magazine and Sygenta professional products. This award is presented to professionals who have made significant contributions to the growth and development of the structural pest industry. She also received the Distinguished Achievement Award in Extension from the Eastern Branch of the Entomological Society of America.

Carlyle Brewster won the Sigma Gamma Delta Teaching Award of Merit in 2009.

In 2009, Kathy Kamminga and Serena Ciparis were inducted in the Virginia Tech chapter of Sigma Xi with a full membership. Also inducted with an associate membership: Hamilton Allen, Meredith Cassell, Gina Davis, Tiffany Gross, Nancy Troyano, Ligia Cota Vieira, Amanda Koppel, Laura Maxey and Lisa Moore.

In November 2009, Mary Etna Richter won the Dow Hokie Spirit Scholarship Award.

At the National Entomological Society of America meeting December 13-16, 2009, Gina Davis received first prize in the Student Oral Presentations.

Ryan Mays received the Employee of the Month Award for December 2009 for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.


Melissa Fischer won the National Science Foundation Scholarship in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (S-STEM).

Doug Pfeiffer received the Award for Excellence in Extension from the Eastern Branch of the Entomological Society of America during the March 7-9, 2010 meeting in Annapolis, MD.

L.T. Kok received the 2010 Award for Outstanding Service to the Entomological Society of America. He received this award for serving as the President of the Eastern Branch from March 2009-March 2010.

In 2010, the following were inducted in the Virginia Tech chapter of Sigma Xi with an associate membership: Lacey Jenson, Aaron Mullins, Daniel Swale, and Brenna Traver. Pathi Srigiriraju was inducted with a full membership.

Pat Hipkins received the 2010 Gamma Sigma Delta Faculty Extension Award.

Scott Salom received the 2010 Distinguished Alumnus Award from the Department of Entomology at the University of Arkansas.
Scotty Bolling was selected to compete for the 2010 Statewide Governor’s Award for Innovation. Scott also received the 2011 President’s Award for Excellence.

Maryam Kamali won a $500 scholarship to participate in a course on Molecular Genetics and Genomics at the University of Washington in Seattle June 14-16, 2010.

Tom Kuhar won the 2010 College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Research Award for Excellence in Applied Research.

Nancy Adamson placed second at the 2010 Ecological Society America student film festival.

Melissa Fisher and Shaohui Wu were inducted in Sigma Xi with full memberships April 5, 2011. Also inducted with associate memberships were Amy Snyder and James Wilson.

Congratulations to the following for their years of service to Virginia Tech (2011): Andy Roberts and Mike Weaver, 30 years; Eric Day, 25 years; Sandra Gabber and Curt Laub, 20 years; Sally Paulson, 15 years and Susan Terwilliger, 10 years.

Amanda Koppel won the 2010 James McD. Grayson Scholarship award. (1)

Nancy Adamson won the 2010 Michael J. Kosztarab Scholarship for Outstanding Achievement in Systematic Entomology. (2)

Gina Davis (Ph.D.) and Will Kuhn (MSLFS) won the Michael J. Kosztarab Scholarship for Outstanding Achievement in Systematic Entomology for 2011. (3)

Andrea Polanco (M.S.) and Serena Ciparis (Ph.D.) won the 2011 James McD. Grayson Scholarship Award. (4)
Faculty

After 20 years with the department, Dr. Jeffery Bloomquist was offered a position he just could not turn down. He left the department in October 2009 to become a Professor of Vector Management at the Emerging Pathogens Institute in Department of Entomology and Nematology at the University of Florida. Three of his students are working with him at the new facility. He is missed by all here and is wished the best of luck.

In June 2010, Dr. Richard Fell, Dr. Donald Mullins, and Dr. Paul Semtner retired. The three of them have a combined 100 years of experience here at Virginia Tech in our department. Even though they have retired, Dr. Mullins and Dr. Fell have agreed to continue teaching at the university for the next two years.

After nine years at the Eastern Shore AREC, Dr. Tom Kuhar and family have happily returned to Blacksburg. Tom has officially transferred to campus. His job duties as research and extension entomologist for vegetables will remain the same. His new office is 312 Price Hall. Since the last newsletter, Tom has picked up two new Ph.D. students, Chris Phillips, who is working on insect ecology of native warm season grasses, and Adam Wimer, who is working on Colorado potato beetle pest management. In addition, Tom also has Anna Wallingford, Meredith Cassell, and Heather Andrews as graduate students. Kathy Kamminga (PhD ‘08) has joined Tom’s group in a postdoctoral position. In 2011, Tom will be embarking on some new research with brown marmorated stink bugs, and welcomes any live specimen donations to his research colony.

Dr. Rod Youngman recently picked up home lawn pest management, which fits well with his ongoing commercial turfgrass pest management assignment. Additionally, Dr. Youngman continues to conduct research and extension programs in field corn, alfalfa, and grass hay crops in the Commonwealth.

Dr. Zach Adelman and his wife are the proud parents of a bouncy baby girl. April Sawa Adelman was born on October 4th, 2010. She weighed 7 lbs 13 oz, and was 21 inches long.

Pat Hipkins and her husband, Lloyd, visited their son and his family in Texas in January 2011. They are excited grandparents of a beautiful grandson.

Pat Hipkins & grandson, Perry

April Adelman

Dr. Troy Anderson joined our department on December 25, 2010 as Assistant Professor of Entomology. He fills the position of toxicology/neurophysiology/pharmacology in our department vacated when Jeff Bloomquist left. Many of you will remember Troy from several years ago when he held a postdoctoral position in Bloomquist’s lab before he left for a position at University of Texas-Tyler. Welcome back, Troy!!
New Students

Spring 2009

Mary E. Richter (Ph.D.) comes to us from George Washington University and is working with Zach Adelman.

Fan Yang (M.S.) was previously at Hebei Agricultural University in China and will be working with Igor Sharakhov.

James Wilson (M.S.) is from North Carolina State University and will be working with Rick Fell.

Amy Snyder (M.S.) received her bachelor’s degree from Armstrong Atlantic State University and will be working with Scott Salom and Loke Kok.

Fall 2009

Azadeh Aryan (M.S.) comes to us from Alzahra University in Tehran, Iran and will be working with Zach Adelman.

Melissa Fischer (Ph.D.) received both her B.S. and M.S. from Northern Arizona University and will be working with Scott Salom and Loke Kok.

Jhalendra Rijal (Ph.D.) received both his B.S. and M.S. from IAAS, Tribhuvan University in Nepal and will be working with Chris Bergh.

Jessica Samler (M.S.) previously studied at Salisbury State University will be working with Ames Herbert.

Brenna Traver (Ph.D.) received her M.S. under Zach Adelman and will be working with Rick Fell studying nosema in honey bees.

Spring 2010

Christopher Philips (Ph.D.) received his B.S. and M.S. from University of Delaware and will be working with Tom Kuhar.

Adam Wimer (Ph.D.) received his B.S. from James Madison University, his M.S. from Virginia Tech and will be working with Tom Kuhar.

Fall 2010

Jake Bova (M.S.) received his B.S. in Biology from Virginia Tech and will be working with Sally Paulson.

David Owens (M.S.) received his B.S. from Virginia Tech and will be working with Ames Herbert.

Molly Stedfast (M.S.) received her B.S. from Virginia Tech and will be working with Dini Miller.

Spring 2011

Sanjay Basnet (M.S.) comes to us from Tribhuvan University in Nepal and will be working with Doug Pfeiffer.

Sean Gresham (M.S.) graduated from Lincoln University, Canterbury, New Zealand and will be working with Chris Bergh.
Anne Jones (M.S.) comes to us from Messiah College in Pennsylvania and will be working with Scott Salom and Don Mullins.

**Students**

Congratulations to the following students upon completion of their defense:


Lacey Jenson (Bloomquist): Successful defense of M.S. thesis “Induction and Inhibition of a Neuronal Phenotype in *Sodoptera Frugiperda* (S21) Insect Cells” on January 22, 2010.


Congratulations to Andrea Polanco (Advisor: Miller) and Matthew Reis (Advisor: Miller). On July 10, 2010, they were married in Grant’s Lick, Kentucky. The wedding was attended by several of the faculty, staff, and students. The department wishes both of them many years of happiness. After the completion of their degrees, Matt and Andrea took some time off to visit with her family in Columbia, South America.
James Mutunga and his wife are the proud parents of a baby boy born September 14, 2010. Baby Allan weighed 6 lbs 13.5 oz. and was 20 inches long.

In October 2010, at the base of a waterfall near Chimney Rock, NC, Charles Shrader proposed to Meredith Cassell. They have been together for almost 5 years and plan a May 2012 wedding. Congrats to the two of you!!

Staff

Natalie Morris began a staff appointment as lab specialist in July 2010 and is working on rearing of Hemlock Woolly Adelgid beetle predators.

Scotty Bolling caught a musky in the New River on Feb 18, 2011 that weighed 22 pounds.


Stephanie Blevins, a horticulturist by training, is working in Pesticide Programs as an office services specialist, starting on January 10, 2011.

Becca Cheng was Pesticide Programs’ webmaster. Her last day was September 13, 2010. She entered a master’s program at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. Whitney Mullins, who began on November 10, replaced Becca.

Alumni, Retirees and Friends

In November 2009, Ray Layton (M.S. ‘85, Ph.D. ‘89) was managing the product safety group for DuPont Agricultural Biotechnology and recently had returned home from making presentations in workshops on ecological risk assessment for genetically modified crops in Argentina, Brazil, China, and then back to Brazil (he’s really glad that he made it back home in time for the birth of his second grandchild!).

Eric Gronning (M.S. ‘94) and his wife are proud parents of Alexander Gabriel Gronning. He was born on March 9, 2009 at 10:40AM. He weighed 7 lbs 4 ozs and was 20 inches long. Eric is still at Sotheby’s and has been busy in search of great antiques.

James Paul “Pauly” Ingrassia was born on August 7, 2009 to Lydia Ingrassia (Pesticide Programs) and her husband, James.

Dan Hilburn (Ph.D. ‘85) working for the Oregon Department of Agriculture, has been involved in trying to keep the gypsy moth, the Japanese beetle, and other invasive pests out of Oregon.
Lacey Jenson (M.S. ’10) is continuing to characterize insect cell cultures expressing insecticide target sites for her Ph.D. with Jeff Bloomquist at the Emerging Pathogens Institute in Department of Entomology and Nematology at the University of Florida.

After completing his M.S. in Entomology, Daniel Swale (M.S. ’10) has joined Jeff Bloomquist at the Emerging Pathogens Institute in Department of Entomology and Nematology at the University of Florida. He is continuing his work with new carbamate insecticides for controlling mosquitoes.

Mary Rhoades celebrated her 70th birthday in July 2010 by renting a cabin for a week at Pipestem State Park, WV. She was joined by several relatives who came for a weekend to help her enjoy the event. They hiked, played miniature golf, went paddleboating, played games, and ate. While at the park, Mary gave a talk on ladybugs at the Nature Center. In early September, Mary visited friends in Helsinki and toured parts of Finland. She still plays music with the Blacksburg Community Band and a recorder group.

After working for the U.S. Army’s Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine (CHPPM) Entomological Science Program as an Oak Ridge Fellow from 1997 through 2000, David Gaines (Ph.D. ’97) took a position with the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) to work on the West Nile virus/arbovirus prevention program. David is still serving as the Public Health Entomologist for VDH and is involved in arboviral disease prevention, but these days his work is more focused on Lyme disease, Ehrlichiosis and other tick borne diseases. In 2010, David coordinated with the Fairfax County Department of Health, the Virginia Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control to identify the first human case of tick-borne encephalitis (Powassan virus) ever recorded in Virginia. Prior to this, the most southern record for Powassan virus transmission was from New York State. The patient, a deer hunter who was bitten by two ticks while hunting near Front Royal, VA in November, 2009 is still recovering.

Donald Cochran continues to edit for the Annals of the ESA.

Cleary Chemical Co. is no longer manufacturing and marketing Heather Wren’s non-toxic cockroach bait, as they ran out of the central ingredient, and were unable to make it themselves, or to buy it cheaply enough. VTIP has the patent still. Heather Wren and Donald Cochran continue to live in Hampstead, NC.

Dr. Robert Pienkowski and his wife, Joni, continue to be healthy and active. Joni stays busy with her painting and friends, Bob working on family history and church projects. They are travelling some, last June went to Glacier National Park, and in August had a week at the beach with their three kids, their spouses, and six grandchildren. Recently, he has been in contact with some of his graduate students, by email with Al Pamanes (M.S. ’64) and his wife Jan, met Bill Allen (Ph.D. ’72)and his wife Dorothy at a play on campus, and met a boyhood friend of Peter Mehring (Ph.D. ’84). Bob is often in touch by email with Tim Blakeslee, a former technician, who he encouraged to go back to school to finish his engineering degree. A few years ago, Tim retired after a career conducting research all over the world for the Navy, always a creative individual. Bob plans to see Tupper Garden, also a former technician. After getting an M.S. in Plant Pathology, Tupper worked for Bob for a few years, then decided to change careers and go to seminary. Tupper has been the pastor at Raleigh-Court Presbyterian Church in Roanoke for a number of years.

After graduating with her Ph.D. in Spring 2010, Amanda Koppel began a postdoctoral position with the University of Kentucky Dobson Research Lab, studying mosquito vectors of Lymphatic Filariasis. She has organized a research laboratory in American Samoa, and will be stationed there for 2-3 years of research beginning in January 2011.