I believe that each of us seeks stability in our lives. From the professional standpoint, each of us wants to have stable funding, stable support, and a long-term stable future. We also hope that our department and college are stable.

I also believe that the Entomology Department at Virginia Tech is stable. Specifically, it is resistant to “deterioration, or displacement.” Our University has undergone shifts in priorities, and our College has dealt with huge budget cuts and the loss of several hundred faculty and staff in the past 18 months. In spite of this, Entomology at Virginia Tech is a strong and viable department. We have 19 faculty, which makes us one of the larger departments in the college. Entomology had 32 graduate students when I filled out the NSF graduate student enrollment survey late last fall. While we are not the biggest department in terms of graduate student enrollment, we are in the upper echelon. Our extension, research, and teaching activities continue unabated, and we are serving our clientele. Insects and arthropods occur by the millions in every county in our state, so we know that we are needed.

Stability is also “constancy of character or purpose; steadfastness.” Our departmental mission did not change due to budget cuts, nor did our commitment to serve the public good. I am proud to say that our faculty and staff have continued to concentrate on doing their jobs well instead of concentrating on cuts and administrative restructuring. It is harder to concentrate on doing your job well when the winds of change are swirling about you, but it is important to do so. Departmental value is often viewed as the sum of all contributions to the University’s goals by the faculty and staff; forgetting that would be a mistake. We have not forgotten, nor will we forget.

“Reliability, dependability” is the third aspect of stability listed in the definition. Administrative restructuring can decrease reliability, because one does not know what the future holds. Entomology was initially mentioned as a possible candidate to move to a newly created College of Science. After a semester of meetings that I attended, we know that Entomology is staying in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences...which is where we have always been. That means that extension agents and students can continue to rely on us for quality programming and teaching. It also means that granting agencies and agrichemical companies can depend on our faculty to write grant proposals, conduct quality research, and publish the results.

Entomology Departments have tended to disappear over the past decade or so, with two recently being merged in the past year. I am very pleased that the word “stability” defines Entomology at Virginia Tech.  

Tim Mack
Honors, Awards, and Grants

Amy Braccia and Robbie Flowers were both awarded funding from the Graduate Research Development Project of the Graduate School. Amy’s major advisor is Reese Voshell. Robbie’s major advisors are Scott Salom and Loke Kok.

Marc Fisher received the Graduate Dean’s Tuition scholarship, the Virginia Pest Management Association Scholarship, a Graduate Student Assembly Travel Grant, and a Graduate Student Assembly Research Grant in the past year. On top of that he was inducted into Sigma Xi this spring. Marc’s major advisors are Carlyle Brewster and Dini Miller.

Robbie Flowers was co-PI with Drs. Salom and Kok on a grant to evaluate the competitive interactions among hemlock woolly adelgid predators. It is funded by the U.S. Forest Service and is renewable annually for up to 3 years.

Sandra Gabbert was chosen by the graduate students to receive the W.B. Alwood Society’s Justin Morrill Award for her help with various research projects and other graduate student activities.

Ashley Lamb was the recipient of the Gene A. and Ina Mae James graduate student tuition scholarship for Fall semester 2003.

Ed Lewis received the CALS Research Award for Excellence in Applied Research in recognition for “advancing the development and adoption of biorational approaches for the management of economically important insect pests.” In addition he was the winner of the Gamma Sigma Delta Research Award of Merit.

Rachael Perrott won 1st prize in the ESA student poster competition, and 2nd prize in the oral presentation competition at the Eastern Branch meeting in Harrisburg, PA.

Youngsoo Son received a scholarship from the Virginia Plant Protection Association in January. His major advisor is Ed Lewis.

Lane Tabor was awarded the Kosztarab Scholarship in Systematics for her studies in forensic entomology. In addition she won a PEO Scholar Award with scholarship funds to be presented in August, 2003. Her co-advisors are Rick Fell and Carlyle Brewster.

Mike Weaver received the William F. Murphy Technology Award for his leadership in the use of electronic technologies in Cooperative Extension. His promptness in responding to the needs of agents and clients throughout Virginia has earned him the reputation of being one of our finest specialists.

Ksenia Tcheslavskaja received the James McDonald Grayson Scholarship at the Ph.D. level. Rachael Perrott received the James McDonald Grayson Scholarship at the Masters level.
FROM THE INSECT ID LAB

It has been a slow year because of the unusual high amount of rainfall. The low sample load has been offset by the activity around two new records for Virginia. The first was a new state record for the pine shoot beetle, *Tomicus piniperda*. This beetle was found in Maryland several years ago and was expected. The second record was not expected and is a moth that turns out to be a new North American record. It is *Pryeria sinica* Moore (Lepidoptera: Zygaenidae) and it feeds on Euonymus. I will have a poster all about it in Cincinnati at the ESA Meeting.

Ryan Mays is working again this year and continues to provide his careful and expert assistance on projects. He is working on a project funded by the Wildlife Department identifying insects that were consumed by birds (you can guess the rest).  

ERIC DAY

Alwood Entomological Society Officers

President: Ashley Lamb
Vice President: Amy Braccia
Secretary: Lane Tabor
Treasurer: Scott Longing
Tour Coordinators: Marc Fisher and Holly Gatton
GSA Reps: Youngsoo Son and Holly Gatton

Faculty

Jeff Bloomquist was promoted to full professor this spring.

Rick Fell co-taught a study abroad course on the Ecology and Culture of South Africa during the first summer school session of 2003. He co-teaches the course with Art Buikema in the Department of Biology. This is the second time he has taken a group of 12 students to South Africa for a month of travel and studies. The students are generally upper class undergraduates in biology or agriculture.

Loke Kok presented a paper at the XI International Symposium on Biological Control of Weeds in Canberra, Australia, April 27- May 2, 2003.

Tom Kuhar and his wife Stacey announce the birth of their second child Brianna Marie on June 19, 2003. She weighed 9 lb 4.5 oz. and is a beautiful treasure to her proud parents. Tom is also busy with his research, and gave a talk on wireworm management in potatoes during a crop management field day at the Eastern Shore AREC on June 23, 2003.

Doug Pfeiffer was chosen as President-Elect of the Eastern Branch of the ESA.

Paul Semtner reports that weather has seriously affected much of his field research this year. He normally finishes putting out his field experiments by Memorial Day. This year about two-thirds of his experiments were transplanted after Memorial Day and one of those was transplanted in the last week of June. In most of the studies that he re-transplanted before the rain, there were high percentages of drowned plants. He had to drastically modify about one-third of his field experiments. He also reports his son, Robert, just completed his three-year tour of duty as a dentist in the Navy. Robert and his wife, Mona, have just bought a new home and moved to Blacksburg. They are practicing with Dr. Lawrence Kyle on South Main Street in Blacksburg and will take over his practice when he retires. They are also expecting their first grandchild at the end of July so he and Marilyn will be spending some time in Blacksburg. Their other son Chris is currently the acting director at the Edgar Alan Poe Museum in Richmond and daughter Vicky is in the Dental School at the Medical College of Virginia.
Reese Voshell and Stephen Hiner were invited by the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service to teach two 1-week short courses at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, WV in March and May. These were on identification and ecology of freshwater invertebrates and biomonitoring with freshwater invertebrates. This is proving to be an excellent opportunity to extend the aquatic entomology teaching and research program to professional aquatic biologists who work with federal and state agencies. Both courses received exceptionally high evaluations, so Reese and Steve are expecting this to become an annual tradition, which is great news for them. The NCTC is a new, state-of-the-art teaching facility with fantastic food and lodging. Even though the workshops run from 8:00 am until at least 9:00 pm each day, and include lectures, field trips, and labs, the trips are a lot of fun.

Mike Weaver and the Pesticide Programs group, which includes Pat Hipkins, Susan Nessler, Dana Beegle, Lydia Ingrassia and Diane Linkous, hosted an open house on June 27, 2003 in their new location on the 3rd floor of Agnew Hall.

Dr. Gabriella Zilahi-Balogh has left Virginia Tech effective July 10th, and taken on a post-doctoral position with Ag Canada, in Harrow, Ontario. She will be working on the biological control of whiteflies in greenhouses. She can be reached at:

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Greenhouse and Processing Crops Research Centre
Harrow, Ontario N0R 1G0 Canada
519-738-2251 Ext 422  zilahibalogh@agr.gc.ca
Riella was a member of our Department for 4 1/2 years as a Ph.D. student and 19 months as a post-doc under the supervision of Drs. Kok and Salom.

STAFF

Becky Barlow’s position has been restructured to take on the newsletter, displays and other publicity for the department, in addition to her duties in Dr. Bloomquist’s lab. She is getting ready to defend her M.S. thesis in Animal and Poultry Sciences, but managed to squeeze in a little time for music this summer too. Her band “Celtibillies” traveled to Washington D.C. to perform in the Smithsonian Folklife Festival.

Nancy Boles retired effective January 1, 2003. She is enjoying her free time, but couldn’t stay away. She has been helping out part-time in the cockroach lab.

Scotty Bolling, Eric Day, Steve Hiner, Warren Mays and Tom McAvoy were instrumental in moving the entomological collection from the Virginia Museum of Natural History to Agnew Hall. This was a multi-day event. Eric, chair of the ad hoc Museum committee, reported that the insects were moved without breakage while maintaining the proper sequence of drawers. The museum’s Blacksburg branch was closed due to budget cuts.

Eric Day was chosen as Treasurer-Elect of the Eastern Branch of the ESA.

Ready, Aim, Fire!
Balloon toss at the Spring Picnic
Sandra Gabbert and her family embarked on a summer adventure in mid-June – driving to Alaska! They expect to take about two months, and set up a web site so people can follow along with them. Sandra’s position has been restructured to take on insect colony maintenance.

Karen Guynn put together a fantastic retirement party for Nancy Boles and Mary Rhoades at Donaldson-Brown.

Tim McCoy has joined the staff and works for Dini Miller.

Mary Rhoades retired in January 2003. One thing she intended to do when she retired was travel, and she certainly has been. She went to Spain in April on a tour, and spent about two weeks in Holland in May. In June she visited her daughter in NY, and in September she drives to Illinois to attend her first ever high school reunion! She has already gone on three local trips sponsored by the county, and won an overnight stay at Pipestem State Park on one of the jaunts. She plans to volunteer at Claytor Lake State Park during the warmer months, and at one or more of the Natural Heritage properties nearby. She is continuing her research project on the mealybug on Buffalo Mountain.

**Students**

Vonny Barlow is spending the summer at the Eastern shore AREC doing field research. He and fellow student Roberto Cordero made presentations at the crop management field day there in June.

Marjorie Browning completed her non-thesis Master’s Degree in December 2002.

Marc Fisher and his wife Sarah announce the birth of Christian Joseph on July 30, 2003. He weighed 7 lbs. 10 oz.

Ashley Lamb organized a delegation of students to participate in the Richmond Insect Fair on June 14, 2003. They hauled lots of stuff to the fair, including live critters, always a hit with visitors. Dini Miller also participated.

Rachael Perrott defended her MS on May 12, 2003. The title of her thesis was "Hexaflumuron Efficiency and Impact on Subterranean Termite (Reticulitermes flavipes) (Isoptera: Fhinotermitidae) Gut Protozoa".

Youngsoo Son announces the birth of his daughter, Theresa Jiho, on Oct. 26, 2002.

Ksenia Tcheslavskaia defended her Ph.D. on May 6, 2003. The title of her dissertation was "Mating Success in Low-Density Gypsy Moth Populations". Her major advisor is Carlyle Brewster. Ksenia is now working as a post-doctoral associate in our department.

**Alumni**

Laura Barbani (MS’02) moved to a town near Paris in August to live with her fiancé, Antoine. She plans to wait about 6 months to look for a job, after she has learned how to write French well. Her address is 10 Rue Aristide Briand, 94100 St Maur Des Fosses, FRANCE. She and Antoine hope to move to southern France in a year or so.
lbarbani@hotmail.com

Chris Barker (MS ’01) is still enjoying the California sunshine, and will be moving from Bakersfield to Davis around the first of September to begin a Ph.D. program in entomology at UC-Davis. The occupancy rate for housing in Davis is extremely high, so one of the biggest challenges was finding an apartment.
Chris has now found a roommate, so that will help keep rent payments within a student’s budget. Chris is also expecting to publish 2 papers from his thesis that he wrote with Drs. Sally Paulson and Carlyle Brewster. Look for them in the Journal of Medical Entomology and the Journal of American Mosquito Control Association this fall. cmbarker@ucdavis.edu

Joe and Janet (Goldblatt) Despins send greetings from Delaware. They can be reached at 120 Monet Circle, Wilmington, DE 19808-1120 or jdespins@rcn.com.

Holly Ferguson (PhD ‘93) writes that she took on the position of Extension IPM Coordinator Specialist at Washington State University in Prosser, WA in January of 2003. Her new responsibilities include Extension IPM Coordinator activities for the state, and field research in mint, grapes, onion, riparian buffers, cover crops in orchards, etc. She still lives in Moxee, WA with her significant other, Butch Jarvis, three horses, one dog, and four cats. She spends her spare time showing and training her horses and keeping everything working on the ranch. hferguson@wsu.edu

Chris Fettig (MS ’96) and his wife Lisa announce the birth of their first child. Hannah Drew was born Feb. 18, 2003, weighing 8 lb. 8 oz. Chris is currently a Research Entomologist in the Pacific Southwest Research Station’s RWU 4502, Chemical Ecology and Management of Western Forest Insects, located in Davis and Placerville, CA. His current research studies include determination of short and long-term implications to forest health of prescribed fire and/or mechanical treatments in the large-scale restoration of fire-dependent (-adapted) forest ecosystems; development of chemical, silvicultural and semiochemical-based monitoring and management tactics for bark beetle species; and determination of the role of semiochemicals in the behavior of forest insects. cfettig@davis.com

Erik Gronning (PhD) writes that he finished his research on reducing cockroach allergen in underprivileged homes in Northern Manhattan and the South Bronx. It was a 3-year study funded by NIH and supported by Columbia University’s Dept. of Environmental Science and the New York State Dept. of Health. The research was difficult but very rewarding, and should be published shortly. After the conclusion of the grant Erik moved back to southern Vermont. Now he is a full-time antique dealer, specializing in 17th and 18th century American fine and decorative arts. He participates in shows throughout the northeast, and writes articles for publications such as the 2001 issue of the journal American Furniture, Antiques & Fine Art, and the May 2003 issue of Antiques. Now he is in the process of compiling an article on “Insects and Antiques: How to Control Damage”. Erik is still a fanatical cyclist, and participated in his first triathlon more than a year ago. He has also completed 2 New York City Marathons! Earlier this year got together with David Jefferson in Washington, DC to help him put together a cockroach allergen control program for the District of Columbia. erikgronning@earthlink.net

Avas B Hamon (’77) retired from the Florida State Collection of Arthropods (FSCA) in August 2002, and now he and wife Donna reside in St. Albans, WV. They have a new house with all the chores of adding landscaping, cutting grass, and finishing the basement, part of which is being converted into a wine cellar. avas@triadpublishing.com

Brett Highland recently received the Florida State Horticulturalist Society Presidents Industry Award for his paper titled “Analysis and Economic Benefits of Serenade Biofungicide in Fresh Market Tomatoes” presented at the 116th annual meeting in Orlando, FL. Even though he was proud of his achievement, he would much rather work with insects. bhighland@agraquest.com
Anne Hillery (MS ’99) married Carl Harper on March 29, 2003, and is now known as Anne Harper. She is employed by the University of Kentucky as a research technician. aehill2@juno.com

David Jefferson (PhD) is the Pesticide Safety Education Program Coordinator for the University of the District of Columbia. He writes that his life has been fairly mundane, except for an EPA-sponsored trip to Hawaii in August of this year. djefferson@udc.edu

Jarrod Leland (PhD ’01) and his wife Myra are the proud parents of Jack Hamilton Leland, who was born on May 29, 2003. He weighed 5 lb. 13.5 oz. jleland@msa-stoneville.ars.usda.gov

Michelle McClanan (MS ’02) gave birth to Ian Scott McClanan on Dec. 27, 2003, just five days after moving into a new house with husband Mark and son Connor! Ian weighed 9 lb. 14.7 oz. mmcclana@columbus.rr.com

Jessica Metzger (MS ’01) can’t believe that her two years in Buglaria are over. The last year was especially great and she writes that it’s hard to leave, especially the sea coast in August. Next, she is heading to Spain/Portugal for a month of relaxation with a friend, then back to Detroit. She has no firm plans yet, but she does have a good lead on a graduate assistantship for her PhD. She expects to be back in the US around mid-September. grapemite@yahoo.com

Michael Moeykens (Ph.D. ’02) and Carrie announce the birth of Elise Germaine Moeykens on Thursday, June 5, 2003 at 11:50 a.m. She was 8 lbs, 20 inches long and a keeper. moeykens.michael@epa.gov

**FRIENDS**

Jeff Gillette, who worked in Dr. Bloomquist’s lab as a post-doctoral research associate from August 1990 to January 2003, recently took a faculty position with Virginia Western Community College in Roanoke, where he can put his natural teaching abilities to good use.
With the retirement of long-time staff members Nancy Boles and Mary Rhoades, the Entomology Department lost 63 years of experience and two friends. On Feb. 3, 2003, we celebrated their careers with a luncheon at Donaldson-Brown. Past and present supervisors of Mary and Nancy lauded their accomplishments and told interesting anecdotes about them.

Some excerpts from Dr. Kosztarab on Mary: “For 17 years Mary was our lab specialist...she assisted with our joint research projects with the graduate students, but often worked independently...what she really liked, and as such...is the author or co-author of more than 3 dozen papers...Mary collected and processed many scale insect samples, and found many new records for eastern U.S...When I discovered a scale insect species new to science...I named that scale insect in her honor, calling it Spartinacoccus rhoadseae”...

Mary Ross and Craig Turner spoke about the years Nancy worked under their supervision. Nancy was single when she started to work for him. People were a lot more protective of young women in their employ in those days. She had a room in a house owned by Ethel Salmons. One day, she simply didn’t show up for work, which was not like her. Dr. Turner and Mrs. Salmons spoke with each other to find out what happened to Nancy. They both became concerned because neither one new her whereabouts. Next day, Nancy shows up like nothing happened. Turns out she and James had eloped!