

Phaëton

The Official Newsletter of the
Maryland Entomological Society

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FACULTY SPONSOR: Frank E. Hanson and Austin P. (Bob) Platt
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Meeting Announcement

The Maryland Entomological Society's 264th regular meeting will be held **Friday, October 17, 2008**; beginning at 8:00 P.M., in **Room 004** (one floor below the street level), Biological Sciences Bldg., University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). Bring a friend and specimens/observations to share. Refreshments will be provided. Presentations are scheduled to begin about 8:15 P.M.

Speaker: **Dr. Arthur Evans**, Research Associate, National Museum of Natural History, and Natural Heritage Program, Virginia Dept. of Conservation and Recreation
Richmond, VA

Title: "What's Bugging You?"

For the past eight years, Art has lived in Richmond, VA, working as an independent researcher, freelance writer, and widely acclaimed nature photographer, popularizing insects and spiders in books and magazines. From March through October, he travels throughout Virginia to search for and monitor rare insect species. He is the author of "An Inordinate Fondness for Beetles" (with Charles Bellamy), "Introduction to California Beetles" and "Field Guide to Beetles of California" (both with James Hogue); all three published by the Univ. of California Press. Art will offer a behind-the-scenes look at the production of his two latest books, "National Wildlife Federation Field Guide to Insects and Spiders of North America" (\$ 19.95/ copy + Tax; Sterling, 2007) and "What's Bugging You? A fond look at the animals we love to hate" (\$ 24.95/ copy + Tax; Univ. of Virginia Press, 2008). He plans to have copies of both these available at the meeting to sell and sign upon request. He will also offer a sneak peek at his next two book projects: "Introduction to Insects of Virginia and the Carolinas" (Univ. of Virginia Press) and "Beetles of Eastern North America" (Princeton Univ. Press). Art is also affiliated with the Dept. of Recent Invertebrates, Virginia Natural History Museum, and the Life Sciences Dept., Virginia Commonwealth Univ., and has written a popular column in the Richmond Times-Dispatch for a number of years.

If you want more information concerning this meeting, contact one of the following people:

Annapolis Area - Harold Harlan (410) 923-0173 (Home) "haroldharlan@comcast.net"
Baltimore Area - Phil Kean (410) 944-4630 (Home)
Fred Paras (410) 374-0425 (Home) "bugandrockman@msn.com"
Bob Platt (Biol. Sci., UMBC x-2261) "platt@umbc.edu"
Frank Hanson (Biol. Sci., UMBC x-2265/-2228) "Hanson@umbc.edu"

Minutes of the May 2008 MES Meeting

The 263rd general meeting of the Maryland Entomological Society was held on Friday, May 16, 2008 at UMBC and was begun at 8:26 p.m. The MES business segment was presided over by Vice-President Phil Kean because Fred Paras could not attend. The April 2008 meeting minutes were read and approved, and the Treasurer's report was issued with the MES Funds total standing at \$2883.67. Society officer nominations for next year, basically a renewal of all the current year's officers, were reviewed, voted on, and approved. Dates for the MES spring field trip were reviewed and the attending members chose Saturday, June 21, with June 22 reserved as the rain date. Green Ridge State Forest was chosen as the field trip site with Phil as leader. Details of the field trip meeting times and locations would be decided later, and Phil should be contacted (phone number on front page of Phaëton) by those interested in attending. Dr. Frank Hanson, as a full-time UMBC faculty member, has been assisting Dr. Platt, UMBC Professor Emeritus and MES Faculty Sponsor, to reserve the room for our meetings and to ensure that the Biological Sciences Building and meeting room doors are all open on our meeting nights. Dr. Hanson is nearing retirement, and we need to find another way to accomplish this. Fred passed along to Phil the fact that he would pursue the acquisition of an adjunct affiliation with the UMBC Biological Sciences Dept. for this purpose. Under news and notes, Dick Smith mentioned that he and the MD DNR Natural Heritage Program are in the process of assembling a map of all known and currently viable Maryland colonies of the Baltimore Checkerspot (*Euphydryas phaëton*), our society's mascot. Contact Dick at Richard.Smith@jhuapl.edu, if you have records of current sites. Ed Cohen mentioned that he had located a specimen of the West Virginia White (*Pieris virginiensis*) in Green Ridge State Forest on May 4, 2008; this is a forest region in Maryland where this butterfly species has not been seen for many years. The meeting then continued with the main program summarized below. This was followed by fine refreshments and discussions.

With the May meeting being the annual "Member's Meeting," the speakers consisted of members Dr. Edgar Cohen and Joy Cohen, who presented many slides and biological records from their June-July 2007 auto trip to the Colorado Springs, CO, area; and Dr. Austin Platt presented slides of his December 2007 trip to the Galápagos Islands. On their way to Colorado Springs the Cohens stopped at the Harry S. Truman

Library in Independence, MO, and at a museum with dioramas of wild animals and Native American scenes, in Salina, KS. Near Colorado Springs, they toured the Phantom Canyon Road, near Victor, CO. This narrow dirt road covers elevations from 6 to 10 thousand feet and is a prime location for butterflies and botany. There they saw Flat-top Pussytoes (*Antennaria corymbosa*), Quaking Aspens (*Populus tremuloides*), Scarlet Gilia (*Ipomopsis aggregata*) from the Phlox (*Polemoniaceae*) family, and Bractless Blazing Star (*Nuttallia nuda*), which opens for only a short time daily. Next they visited the nearby John May Entomological Museum and campground, and saw Weidemeyer's Admiral (*Limenitis weidemeyeri*) and the beautiful Colorado Hairstreak (*Hypaurotis crysalus*) in flight, along with many common and widespread butterfly species. The hairstreak's host plant, Gambel's Oak (*Quercus gambelii*), was there. Three generations of May family collectors contributed to the museum's vast holdings of worldwide insects. Striking specimens included a giant silk moth from northern Australia, a giant walking stick (*Extatosoma popa*) from New Guinea, and the large Atlas Moth, *Attacus atlas*. The Zebulon Pike was driven part-way up Pikes Peak, and they viewed the Crystal Reservoir. At the peak's base was Orange-flowered Hawkweed (*Hieracium aurantiacum*) and Clusterhead Pink (*Dianthus carthusianorum*). At Divide, CO, plants photographed included the Prairie Flax (*Linum lewisii*) and the lupine-like Golden Banner (*Thermopsis lanceolata*). At the Black Forest Bed and Breakfast, where they stayed, they found Tiger and Geometer moths, a longhorn Prionid beetle, an Ichneumon wasp, and a Western Poplar Sphinx (*Pachysphinx occidentalis*). The Cohens entertained a side trip to Fort Collins, CO, where they visited the Gillette Museum of Entomology at Colorado State University. North of Fort Collins they photographed the beautiful Sulphur Eriogonum (*Eriogonum umbellatum*), a member of the Buckwheat family (*Polygonaceae*). Back near Colorado Springs, the striking Showy Milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*) was seen, and they visited the famous "Garden of the Gods," a local geological attraction with beautiful red-colored mountains, many with strange and labeled sculpture-like shapes (e.g., the "kissing camels"). On their return east, the Cohens visited the Sternberg Museum, a paleontological exhibit in Hays, KS, the Wizard of Oz Museum and a nearby winery in Wamega, KS.

The Galápagos Islands are located on the very northern edge of the Nazca tectonic plate, which is bounded by the Cocos (north), the Pacific (west), the

South American (east), and the Antarctic (south) plates. A plume of hot mantle material that originates near the earth's core and rises to the crust becomes a seafloor "hot spot" and perhaps an underwater volcano which may eventually grow big enough to become an island. Because the earth's crustal plates are constantly in motion, the island eventually moves off the hot spot over millions of years, and new islands form, thus becoming an archipelago. The Nasca plate, moving across such a hot spot, formed the Galápagos Islands. A fracture zone just north of the Galápagos, termed the Hess Deep, descends 18-22 thousand feet below sea level. Dr. Platt joined a biological tour group to the Galápagos, sponsored by the University of Florida McGuire Center for Lepidoptera, from December 2 to 9, 2007. His plane landed first in Quito, Ecuador, where he engaged in a short tour and unfortunately lost money locked in a car to thieves. A small plane later took the group to Baltra Island in the Galápagos, from which small boats departed on various days for tours to the other islands. On many of these islands, Dr. Platt observed the famous "Darwin's finches." He noted that Charles Darwin eventually realized that these finches had evolved from other immigrant finches. The ultimate result was an array of new species of finches, and that phenomenon in turn inspired Darwin's theory of evolution. Unfortunately, however, not long after Darwin's visit, one species, Darwin's Large Ground Finch (*Geospiza magnirostris magnirostris*), became extinct because of the destruction of its food sources by introduced feral goats. The only remnants were bones of a specimen found in an owl pellet. Dr. Platt visited a large lava tube on one of the islands and generally observed and photographed several wildlife species while on the Galápagos. Bird species he saw included penguins, pelicans, Swallowtail Gulls (*Creagrus furcata*), Blue-footed Boobies (*Sula nebouxii*), the Red-billed Tropicbird (*Phaëthon aethereus*), and endemic species such as the Flightless Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax harrisi*), Galápagos Hawk (*Buteo galapagoensis*), and Nazca Boobie (*Sula granti*). Reptiles included the Galápagos Land Iguana (*Conolophus subcristatus*), sea turtles, and, of course, the Galápagos Giant Tortoise (*Geochelone elephantopus*). The Charles Darwin Research Station and the Galápagos National Park Service sponsor a Giant Tortoise breeding and repatriation program on the islands. These tortoises are actually "noisy" (with a loud, grunt-like sound) during breeding. Species of seals, sharks, surgeonfish, rays, and starfish were also

observed. Many native animals are imperiled on the islands and need help due to introduced animals such as the feral goats and also dogs, which exhaust native food sources and destroy habitats. There are very few endemic species of insects on the islands. The only bee species on the island is the Galápagos Carpenter Bee (*Xylocopa darwinii*). Night-flying insects are preyed upon by the Galápagos Red Bat (*Lasiurus brachyotis*).

Respectfully submitted,
Richard H. Smith
MES Secretary

Announcements

1. Gene Scarpulla, and the other authors of included articles, are to be congratulated for the excellent current issue of the *Maryland Entomologist*, which has just been published (Vol. 4, No. 4, September 2008). Without Gene's organizational skills, personal efforts, and perseverance, this issue would simply not have been published. It was Gene's idea to limit the issue to a single topic, the insects of Hart-Miller Island; and he took on the journal's editorship, planning of related field trips, gathering background information and input from other MES members, interested non-members, and applicable government agencies; and functionally whipping the whole issue into shape. He found a printer, coordinated other authors' input, and addressed many diverse concerns about format, costs, and quality. The final product is outstanding. I believe a copy has already been mailed to every MES member whose dues are current. Please contact Gene and thank him for his efforts on behalf of the MES.

2. Regular MES meetings are held the 3rd Friday of each of 6 months each year: Oct., Nov., Feb., Mar., Apr. & May (parallel to UMBC's academic year). The remaining meetings for the 2008 "MES year" include:

<u>month</u>	<u>date</u>	<u>speaker</u> (if known)	<u>topic</u>
Oct. 08	17 th	Art Evans	(See Front Page)
Nov. 08	21 st	TBA	TBA
Feb. 09	20 th	TBA	TBA
Mar. 09	20 th	TBA	TBA
Apr. 09	17 th	TBA	TBA
May 09	15 th	TBA	members' "pot-pourri"

3. [Extracted from the WABC website]: **Sunday, Nov., 23rd**, 10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M., there will be a workshop for conservation-minded Marylanders with some experience handling insects or other exotic animals and/or significant gardening experience who are interested in volunteering to rear the Baltimore Checkerspot butterfly (*Euphydryas phaeton*) at their home or other facility. **Workshop Fee: \$25, limit 20, registration required. The deadline for registration is Nov. 16.** All stock will remain under the control of the [Baltimore Checkerspot Restoration Project of Maryland](#) to be used exclusively for approved conservation and restoration efforts at schools, nature centers, or other Maryland nonprofit organizations.

Workshop participants will learn how to set up a small, low-cost (under \$200) rearing facility; how to care for Baltimore Checkerspot eggs, larvae, pupae, and adults; and how to propagate the butterfly's host plant. Rearing this species is not difficult, but requires some commitment of time on a daily basis through 6-8 weeks during butterfly's annual life cycle. Participants are not expected to commitment to rear the species, but to gain enough knowledge to make a decision about whether or not to commit for at least three years.

The objective of the workshop is start developing a cadre of volunteer breeders who can successfully and reliably provide stock to help replenish the Baltimore Checkerspot population in Maryland, where the butterfly is the official state insect. The Mid-Atlantic population of this freshwater wetland species has dwindled in recent decades and in 2003 was placed on the Maryland list of Threatened and Endangered Animals as a watch-listed species. Participants will be required to certify they will obey all state and federal laws that apply to the Baltimore Checkerspot.

This workshop is sponsored by: the Baltimore Checkerspot Restoration Project of Maryland, Washington Area Butterfly Club, Black Hill Regional Park, and Maryland National Capital Parks and Planning Commission, Montgomery County. Held at the Black Hill Visitor Center, Black Hill Regional Park, 20926 Lake Ridge Drive, Boyds, MD. To register, mail the application ([Microsoft Publisher file here](#); [Adobe PDF file here](#)) and \$25 fee as instructed on the form. You will receive confirmation and complete information by e-mail no later than Nov. 18. For more information, contact Pat Durkin, plusultra@aol.com, 202-255-3629 or Denise Gibbs, denise.gibbs@mncppc-mc.org, 301-444-3142.

4. Ed Cohen reported a record of the West Virginia White, found May 4, 2008, in the Green Ridge State Forest, on Fifteen Mile Creek Rd., at the junction of Piclic Ridge, Allegany Co., MD. This butterfly has been found occasionally in western Maryland in recent years, but the population has been significantly reduced because of the introduction of garlic mustard, which is toxic to their larvae. It was rather common in that territory 20 years ago, and several members of the MES have records of it from the 1980's.

5. Ed also reported observing a giant swallowtail flying across the road leading to the Catonsville Senior Center, off Rolling Road, Baltimore Co., MD, on September 11, 2008. This species has been reported to be uncommon in Baltimore Co.

6. The [American Entomological Society](#) will hold their next monthly meeting at 4:00 P.M., Wed., Oct. 22nd, in Room 102 Fisher Greenhouse (at the east edge of Townsend Hall parking lot), Univ. of Delaware, Newark. Dr. Marten Edwards will speak on: "Blood and guts: Molecular studies of mosquito physiology". For more details, call: 215-561-3978, or go to: "www.acnatsci.org/hosted/aes".

7. Distributing this newsletter via e-mail saves costs of printing and mailing, and allows quick distribution of information. Members with no current e-mail address will still to be sent hard-copies for the foreseeable future. For questions, please contact any person listed at the bottom of the front page. **ALSO** please provide your current e-mail address. Dues for **1 Oct. 2008 through 30 Sep. 2009**, are **\$10.00 / year**. Please send dues & any address or other corrections to:

Edgar Cohen, Jr., MES Treasurer Phone: (410) 740-0481
5454 Marsh Hawk Way
Columbia, MD 21045 e-mail: edcohenfam@yahoo.com

8. The **Audubon Naturalist Society** (ANS) offers a wide range of nature events & experiences for all ages. They are offering courses on selected Nature topics for credit (in cooperation with certain local colleges) plus many "fun" nature events & experiences. Their website has a lot of information on local & regional conservation issues & their education outreach program: "Green Kids". You can even download a PDF catalog of their events. Some classes, events, & bird walks are free, but most require a fee & pre-registration. For more, or to register, call (301) 652-9188 ext. 10, or go to: www.AudubonNaturalist.org.

9. The **Washington Area Butterfly Club** (WABC) is active in local & regional nature education, observation & conservation. Their web site includes butterfly gardening, wildlife habitats, and related youth education, plus articles, plant sales, & “links” to other nature resources in the area. For more details, go to: <http://users.sitestar.net/butterfly/>, or contact Pat Durkin at: (202) 483-7965, or at: [“plusultra@aol.com”](mailto:plusultra@aol.com).

10. [Paraphrased from the WABC website]: A special program, “A world of butterflies” will be presented three (3) times on Monday, Oct. 27th, 2008; at the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) Baird Auditorium, 10th & Constitution Avenue, NW Washington, DC. Presentations will begin at: 6:00 p.m. (code 1W0-462); at 7:00 p.m. (code 1W0-463); and at 8:00 p.m. (code 1W0-464). **Tickets: \$32.** Enter the world of beautiful butterflies as Nate E. Erwin, manager of the exhibition [Butterflies + Plants: Partners in Evolution](#), talks about how butterflies and plants have evolved and diversified together for millions of years. Then proceed to the exhibition, which features colorful murals, videos, and photographs that provide background for your visit to the Butterfly Pavilion to see more than 300 live butterflies fluttering about and alighting on plants such as jasmine and verbena. Each session entails a 30-minute lecture and private viewing of the Natural History Museum's Butterfly Pavilion and its corresponding exhibit. Purchase tickets online: <http://residentassociates.org/ticketing/calendar/list.aspx?Week=10/26/2008>.

11. The 8th Annual North American Pollinator Protection Campaign (NAPPC) International Conference will be held 22-24 Oct., 2008, in Washington, DC. It will be hosted by the U. S. Dept. of State. To register for this event, & maybe get more details, go to: www.regonline.com/NAPPC2008.

12. The **Maryland DNR** website this month offers lots of info. (& ‘links’), but you sometimes must follow a series of links for details. This month’s features include: a fact sheet about how homeowners can help protect their property from wildfires in this area, a new “Trees for Schools” project under the Tree-Mendous Maryland program, a record year in the oyster-growing program, state parks, volunteering, reservations, hunting, & recent fish stocking news. For more details about these, related info., & contact points, go to: [“www.dnr.state.md.us”](http://www.dnr.state.md.us).

13. Sat., Oct. 18th, at 1 P.M., the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, Edgewater, MD, will present an Introduction to Spiders (for children) with a short nature excursion included. Fee: \$4.00 each, and pre-registration suggested. Call (301) 238-2737.

14. Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Powder Mill Rd., Laurel, MD, offers a **free** Wildlife Festival Sat., Oct. 18th, 2008; 10 A.M. – 3 P.M. Pre-registration suggested. For more details & to pre-register, call: (301) 497-5763.

15. I recently received an article (from a Canadian Medical Journal) detailing a fatal caterpillar sting suffered by a young lady eco-tourist in Peru this past summer. I could provide a copy upon request (Ed.).

16. More places / websites worth checking include:

- the National Aquarium (in Balto.), [“www.aqua.org”](http://www.aqua.org)
- the Maryland Science Center, [“www.mdsci.org”](http://www.mdsci.org)
- the USDA, [“www.usda.gov”](http://www.usda.gov)
- the National Zoo, [“www.nationalzoo.si.edu”](http://www.nationalzoo.si.edu)
- the Maryland Zoo, in Druid Hills Park, Baltimore, open 10 A.M.- 4 P.M. daily, with free admission Wednesdays this fall: www.marylandzoo.org .
- the National Zoo, [“www.nationalzoo.si.edu”](http://www.nationalzoo.si.edu)

17. For current details on a very wide range of topics for central Maryland & DC; like sports, restaurants, special events, & ads, check out the **“What’s Up? Annapolis”** magazine. They even have a live “harbor cam”. For a free subscription mailed to your home address (limited to Annapolis & surrounding areas), contact them at: What’s Up?, Inc., 929 West St., Suite 208A, Annapolis, MD 21401; by phone: (410) 267-9390; or via their website: [“www.whatsupmag.com”](http://www.whatsupmag.com).

Current (2009) MES Officers

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