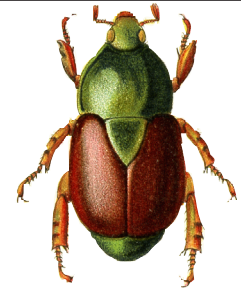


SCARABS



Weist lukter, vel de kommer

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VII Reunión Latinoamericana de Scarabaeoidología

By Brett C. Ratcliffe

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The seventh meeting of Latin American Scarabaeoidology was held in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, from 13-16 November 2006. About 70 people were in attendance from Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Bolivia, Canada, U.S.A., France, Belgium, Germany, United Kingdom, and South Africa. There were ten posters exhibited, and 42 scientific papers were presented. Caroli Hamel and Sebastian Herzog did an amazing job of organizing, hosting, and caring for all of the minute details that made for an extremely successful meeting. Their efforts were greatly appreciated by all.

Santa Cruz, a bustling small city, is on the east side of the Andes about 17° south of the equator and 400 meters in elevation. The climate was warm (pleasantly so from the perspective of a North American coming from a winter climate). The excellent meeting facility

was the Hotel Casa Kolping, a modest hotel with meeting rooms, bar, and restaurant. A break for refreshments was held on the hotel's inner courtyard at mid-morning and mid-afternoon of each meeting day, where a lot of informal, convivial discussions were held with colleagues.

The last day of the formal presentations concluded with informal discussions about various topics but focusing mostly on the dilemma of obtaining collecting and export permits in many countries. Lively exchanges took place as one might imagine. Ideas for the location of the next RELAS were put forward (Panama, Peru, Bolivia again, Guatemala again), but a locale has not yet been decided.

Thursday was the "field trip" day. A farewell dinner at a buffet restaurant in downtown Santa Cruz ended the day, and there

was much toasting, regaling of field experiences, planning for future collaborative ventures, and genuine collegiality. These were very successful meetings.

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S. L. de Assis Júnior, F. L. Santos, J. A. Pacheco y A. P. Lemos.

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S. L. Bonivardo, A. N. Martínez y E. Pollacchi.



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C. Hamel, D. Mann, F. Vaz-de-Mello y S. K. Herzog.

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J. A. Noriega, L. F. Escobar y A. Morales.

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F. Oikawa, W. Mesquita Filho y C. A. H. Flechtmann.

Diversidad de escarabajos coprófagos en dos tipos de hábitat en Tarija-Bolivia.

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L. A. Pulido Herrera y C. Medina.

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Estado de salud de la colección en seco de Scarabaeidae (Coleoptera: Scarabaeidae) del Instituto Alexander von Humboldt (IAvH), Colombia.

I. Quinteros.

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S. Yukimi Tananbe, V. Gomes Tabet, W. Mesquita Filho y C. A. H. Flechtmann.



RELAS meeting room at Hotel Kolping.



Comparing data.
From left: **Eider Ruiz-Manzanos**,
Kerry Katovich,
Federico Ocampo.

Miguel Morón receiving the award for the Outstanding Paper of the Year published in the *Coleopterists Bulletin* from Coleopterists Society President **Mary Liz Jameson** and Secretary **Brett Ratcliffe**.



Identifying scarabs! From left: **Keith Philips**, **Bruce Gill**, and **Vania Alejandra Conchari**.





**Mary Liz
Jameson** with
light trap at Flora
and Fauna lodge.



Studying
collections at
the Museo de
Historia Natural
Noel Kempff.
From left:
Brett Ratcliffe,
**Matthias
Herrmann,**
**Tito Vidaurre
Sánchez.**

Discussions during the break.
From left: **Eider Ruiz-Manzanos**, **Hortensia Carrillo-Ruiz**, **Imelda Martinez-Morales**, **Miguel Moron**.



Mary Liz Jameson and **Eider Ruiz Manzanos** at Eider's birthday celebration at Case de Gamba.





RELAS group photo.



Jack Schuster entertaining at the farewell banquet.

Collecting Small Scarabs at the Blacklight

Dispatches from the Diplo Desk - Part 3

by Scott McCleve

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For decades I collected most beetles with an aspirator of my own design that allowed me to collect most medium-sized and smaller beetles. I was also able to suck up a lot of beetle farts and other exhalations and secretions and excreta and dandruff and mysterious substances no one even knows about yet. Some of these are possibly conducive to good health, and they certainly assist one in achieving an active immune system. But others are noxious and those moth scales are likely carcinogenic. On some nights when I collected a whole lot of *Diplotaxis* specimens (1,500 or so) I noticed I was having some stomach reflux (GERD) on a regular basis. GERD is bad.

Some of the beetles sucked up into an aspirator tend to arrive in the collecting chamber in a foul mood and start chopping off appendages of other beetles. Certain chrysomelids and longhorns really play poorly with other beetles--especially the subfamilies with the flat-fronted-grasshopper-type-head style. Some other smaller families that are supposed to be phytophagous or fungivorous (like anthribids) are just beastly to the other beetles. And those *Temnochila* (trogossitids) are savage!

Collecting about 157 beetles from each side of a sheet on each visit to each station gets to be tiresome and exhausting, with lots of bending over and inhaling at the same time. I think this is a recipe for reflux, especially when aspirating beetles from the ground sheet. It is hard on the knees too when there are rocks under the groundsheet.

Editors' Note: Scott needs to ask Doctor Arthur V. Evans, Ph.D., where he gets his really cool knee pads!

It took a long time to be sure I was getting every little diplo that flew in--especially in Mexico where I sometimes (pre-1994) got up to nearly 20 species a night - and some of the species were invariably represented by one or two or three specimens each. Lots of time, lots of work, some reflux, plus incipient sciatica and sore knees.

What to do? Well, I have always run a generator in my light outfit, so I went to Sears and got the little number pictured here in Figure 1. I took it home and sucked up a bunch of bugs at the porch lights. I then took the device into the house and inadvertently released most of the bugs into said house. A lot of the captives get out as

soon as you stop the flow of air into it; they just crawl out the way they came in. My dear wife Annie was not pleased.

Hmmmm. Now what? My friend Carla McManus of Lee Station Ranch, who is really good with mechanical things, and who no longer had any use for a bunch of those pantyhose outfits, suggested that I cut off and use the toe end as a screen bag as you see in Figure 2. It worked beautifully. I have never had anything work so perfectly on the first application. Plus, the pantyhose fabrics that I have tried are all impervious to ethyl acetate, even after a year in the freezer.

This model, the “2.2 amp Kenmore HEAVY DUTY DYNOMITE” model number 208.6013280 was available years ago for about \$25. There ought to be other models available now, or I could sell you mine for about \$100.00 plus shipping. This baby twists in your hand when you turn it on and goes “Vroom! Vroom!”

You can collect as many beetles as you want in mere seconds. A couple minutes each side of the sheet is usually adequate for me to get every diplo on the sheet. A caveat is necessary here. Seriously. I did not start using this until I was already a committed diplo nut. I limit my depredations pretty much to diplos and some of the other scarabs. This device, equipped with the pantyhose-toe-screen-bag, is capable of eliminating all the insects that come to your lights.

However, it can also be pretty selective. The suction stream is so strong that you can focus it within an inch or so of the specimens you want, and leave other nearby creatures alone to enjoy your lights, socialize, mate with whomever they find accommodating, consume some of their fellows, whatever.

Are you wondering how many specimens, especially the smaller beetles, get torn apart within the vortex of rushing air and all the other beetles plus trash? That is the most amazing thing. Even tiny aphodiines sucked out of the very air as they approach the station are apparently almost never harmed. Even smaller and more lightly built beetles, like some of the tiny hydrophilids, seem to retain their elytra and all their appendages. This was a wonderful revelation to me, and helped me to see how insects are over-engineered to withstand even hurricane force winds. How they manage to fold up their tiny fragile metathoracic wings and clamp down their elytra in such a violent vortex is wonderful.

Apparently the rushing vortex seems to prevent the chewing-up-of-other-beetles activity. I think they are concentrating on hanging on for their own survival rather than resorting to agonistic activities. Equipping each pantyhose bag with some previously balled-up bits of paper toweling before you turn on the machine gives the inmates something to clutch besides each other. (Some preparation and assembly are required.) But you will want to get them into your



Figure 1.



Figure 2.



Figure 3.

previously-charged collecting jar as soon as possible. The bag of beetles will be a moiling mass, and the belligerence begins when the power is off.

Moths, unlike beetles, tend to get a little rumped, but they are quite attractive with clear wings, totally devoid of those noxious scales! The beetles are not just silvered with the scales, because I think the scales exit the entire device, out where you can still breathe them in. Not using the little cloth filter that comes with the machine likely helps in venting the scales. For obvious reasons, it is best to avoid vacuuming up moths.

The entry aperature of my device is just under an inch (maybe 23 mm) so it can collect most of the dynastines here in Cochise County. For a collecting jar I use a Mason-type widemouth jar with a lid and a band. As soon as you have an appropriate quantity of specimens in the machine, you shut it off and quickly pop off the nosecone thingy, grasp the neck of the pantyhose bag, and pop the bag into your jar with ethyl acetate saturated papers in the bottom of the jar. Then, attach another pantyhose bag, get another jar, and visit your next station.

Happy collecting! Be selective--do NOT be a beetle pig! And catch me some diplos!

Post 9-11 Flight Issues and Our Generators

By Rich Cunningham

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As many of us know, taking a generator with us on a flight to that far off fantastic collecting excursion down south has become difficult or impossible. There has even been a few of us unfortunates who have just stayed home with our spouses, offspring, jobs and endless honey do's, foregoing that intense rush of having a great scarab, that all the boys would salivate for, hit the sheets of your mercury vapor set up in the middle of the cloud forest.

As things are now, we are able to bring a generator that is new (unused), still in its unopened box with our luggage. The problem is of course you can't ship it back with you, and generators cost a lot of money. The following may help those of us depauperate type souls. Dexin International Inc., located in Covina, CA has some choices of generators that make it almost possible to leave the now-used generator in the country that you are collecting in. Think of the "good will" and maybe great insects that a collaborator (now your close personal friend) from that country might be inclined to bestow on you if you left him your hard-fought power source. The best buys from Dexin (DuroPower) are:



1. DP 800W Portable Generator, \$149.99, 15"x12"x13", 51 lbs. 2 Stroke Engine (oil-gas mixture), rated at 61 dBA. It will run for 6 hrs. at full output, and 10 hrs. at 50% output. 1 year warranty.

2. DP 1250i Digital Inverter Generator, \$399.99, 18"x10"x18", 31 lbs., 1.8 hp (52cc) air-cooled OHV 4 Stroke Engine (regular gas), rated at 58 dBA. It runs 4.5 hrs. at full output and 6.5 hrs. at 60% output. 1 year warranty. The DP 2000i is \$699.99.

The website is www.duopower.com and the toll free number is 1-866-443-9468. The prices all include free shipping. You may have to sign a waiver that you will not be using certain models in California due to the smog standards.

Editor Rich flanked by two lesser, unimportant and obscure scarab workers: Henry Howden and Brett Ratcliffe

Note: The address and contact person is: Matthew Perri Marketing Manager 677 Arrow Grand Circle Covina, CA 91722 Tel: 626-859-7475 Fax: 626-859-7474 e-mail: matthew@dexinint.com

Curatorial Problems

By Barney D. Streit

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Scarab enthusiasts everywhere know this: we measure the success of our collecting trips by the weight (instead of the number of specimens) of beetles collected. This holds true for both light collecting and for trapping dung beetles. Taking care of this many beetles can present a problem, especially in the tropics, where high temperatures and humidity can quickly rot specimens. Scarabaeines are especially susceptible.

I place light-collected material in an air-tight Zip-Loc bag, along with a piece of paper towel impregnated with ethyl acetate. Dung beetles get the same treatment, but after they are washed in a strainer and dried on a paper towel. The bags are then stored in a plastic container, to be checked periodically. If the towels become saturated with moisture they are discarded and replaced.

This calls for a lot of ethyl acetate. If flying to a collecting locality, I place ethyl acetate in a small, disposable plastic water bottle, such as the Kirkland brand from Costco. No, the ethyl acetate does not eat through the plastic. You cannot carry on liquid as of this writing, so the bottle is placed into a Zip-Loc bag which goes in the checked luggage. There is currently a 3-ounce limit when flying from the United States. If you have trouble bringing

ethyl acetate with you, you will be forced to buy fingernail polish remover in foreign drug stores.

Once home, the plastic boxes holding the bags should be refrigerated, and then curated as soon as possible. They will remain pliable and mold-free as long as there is ethyl acetate left in the bags. Now comes the big problem: how does one pin and label all those beetles?

A simple, obvious solution is to employ hired help. A win-win situation for all: I get beautifully pinned and labeled specimens, they get the thrill of touching rare and exotic scarab beetles. I have a couple of ladies from work (see photo) help with this. And yes, I require that they dress up while curating: if you look good, you feel good. If you feel good, you do nice work.

A note about labels seems apropos here. Older entomologists put three labels on their specimens. The primary label was for the locality and date, the secondary label noted how the specimen was collected, and the bottom was the determination label. Admittedly, this was for Schmitt box-based systems. Since drawers and unit trays are now used, I have

dropped the determination label, but cling to the use of primary and secondary labels, even though it is more work than cramming everything on one label.

It should be noted that it is only a rumor that Doctor Art Evans, Ph.D., had specimens in his collection with labels such as “1.5 road km west of Frene Con Motor” and “Topes A 500 M” not to mention “vicinity of Curva Peligrosa.” A trip to the Los Angeles County Museum, where his collection resides, will be needed to quell this vicious rumor.

Editor Barney at Scarabs headquarters, with curators Cheree and Cindy, showing exasperation because a left metatarsal claw of a specimen is 2° off center. Why are the ladies dressed up? See text!



Word Bug Smashed!

The bug mentioned in *Scarabs* (issue 15) in Mac version of Microsoft Word has finally been eliminated. With the latest version, a strip of pin labels can now be printed using the entire sheet of paper.

Astute readers may recall that previous versions of Word would change the dimensions of a rectangular sheet of paper to a square when text was reduced for printing labels. As a result of this bug, you could print only as far down of a sheet of paper as the paper's width.

It took Microsoft approximately 15 years to fix this problem.

Movie Review: The Blue Butterfly

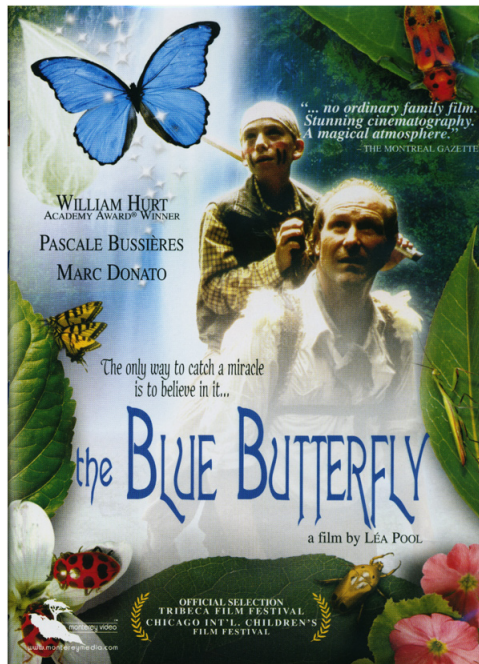
By Barney D. Streit

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Editor Rich's note: This review is well written, and the story line is entertaining and meaningful. But, like Editor Bill and I were, many of our readers may be quite taken aback, concerned and worried about Editor Barney's possible latent propensity towards lepidopterous soft, warm and fuzziness. After all, hasn't he always embodied Phanaeine strength, hardness, horniness and strong aroma? Isn't he always surrounded by women with very pleasing morphological characters? It has not seemed that he has been overly comfortable discussing shower curtain colors with his extended harem in the past, unless of course the curtains were like Editor Bill's beetle shower curtains. But then, our worries over Editor Barney giving up his beetles and starting to collect butterflies were put to rest as we remembered he is still somewhat of a newly wed, married to a beautiful, intelligent, understanding, athletic, petite, much (MUCH!) younger woman (see Scarabs #18, page 7) who always welcomes Barney's friends to their home during those long collecting trips to Arizona. We realized that this foray into the scaly arena must be an artifact of recent marriage, and that the man is attempting to please a beautiful, young (and way out of his league) bride in many ways, including showing he is in touch with his caring, emotional side. We trust that this lepidopterous softness is teneral and Editor Barney will be return to his hard, horny, aromatic self soon.



William Hurt, Pascale Bussièrès,
Marc Donato
2006
97 minutes

From the DVD box:

“The Blue Butterfly tells the extraordinary story of a 10 year-old boy, diagnosed as terminally ill, whose dream is to catch the most beautiful butterfly on Earth, the mythic and elusive Blue Morpho. His mother persuades a renowned entomologist (William Hurt) to take them on a trip to the Costa Rican rain forest to search for the butterfly, leading to an adventure that will transform their lives.

And so, their journey begins. A journey of courage, redemption and love. Inspired by a true story, this is a magical film about a courageous young boy and a jaded man who chase a dream, and whose lives are forever changed.

The only way to catch a miracle is to believe in it...”

Our review:

Watching this film will be a deeply emotional experience. I was reminded of my boyhood, when I began collecting insects. As a result, you immediately bond and sympathize with the young boy, who begins the movie by asking himself “Why me? Why am I destined to die so young?”

The acting is superb. After all, the entomologist is portrayed by the great William Hurt, an Academy Award winner. There are many great shots of animals and insects. One gets the impression that there is a beetle on every branch, a bird in every tree, and an animal under every bush. Nonetheless, *The Blue Butterfly* is highly recommended.

In Past Years - I

by Henry F. Howden

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AMAZONAS

In the 1970s my wife, Anne, and I were bold enough to take 48 (50 including us) students and a few staff to the Amazon for spring break. Time was late February, the break 10 days, the destination Leticia, Colombia. We started in Ottawa, flew to Bogota where we overnighed, then on to Leticia in an old DC3. A week later we again overnighed in Bogota and returned to snowy Ottawa. At that time the total cost of the trip, all lodging, food, travel, etc., came to \$500 Canadian per person. Our lodging in Leticia overlooked the Amazon and consisted of a beautiful central swimming pool with a row of modern cabins on each side and at one end a covered dining area.

Things generally went well, beetle collecting was fair to good. Several of the girls asked Anne if there was some bad new disease because they had lots of red spots in odd places! She assured them it was only chigger bites and that colorless nail polish on the spots mostly stopped the itching. One fellow went back to Ottawa early and later said he couldn't stand "the bed bugs". He should have asked about red spots. All went smoothly for several days until a small anaconda turned up in the swimming pool. That caused considerable consternation, particularly among those that didn't like snakes. We had to remind them



Henry and Anne relaxing at home. Photograph courtesy Fede Ocampo.

it was the Amazon and there were snakes in the forest. Nighttime swimming slowed down.

Then there was the day of the sloth. One student noticed the sloth in a nearby tree, and since several of us were interested in the moths and scarabs that had been recorded living in the fur of sloths, we asked a local worker if he could get it down. "No problema" he said, which we later learned usually meant "who knows". We didn't consider what to do with the sloth if he did get it down. Up the tree went the worker; the sloth let go with one front leg and took a swipe at the worker. Fortunately the sloth did not quite reach the worker, but its claw caught the pocket in his pants and tore off one pants leg. The worker came down in a hurry, we had to buy him a new pair of pants (cost \$3) and the sloth continued blissfully feeding.

Other small incidents occurred, but the main one that comes to mind is the return trip to Bogota on the DC3. There were several locals added to the return trip (fuel had been burned off on the way down,

so extra people could get on) and one had a large, 50 pound, piece of Amazon cat fish. Before reaching Bogota the entire plane smelled of slightly "off" cat fish. Another large lady had a young monkey which, to keep warm, she stuffed down her ample bosom. The results were quite interesting with the monkey popping out every now and then. The rest of the trip to Ottawa went smoothly.

Two years later we decided to repeat the Leticia trip with the same arrangements. This time we had several pre-trip meetings warning everyone about chiggers, snakes in the pool, etc., and asking if anyone had medical problems (we were learning). Costs had gone up to \$650 Canadian, but it still seemed do-able. All went well until we had our early breakfast in Bogota and one of the girls fainted. We were told that she would be OK, she was only anemic and would be fine at a lower elevation (Bogota is about 8000 ft. elevation). She hadn't bothered to tell us before hand, and since there was not anything we could do about it, we loaded her on the old DC3 and got ready to leave for Leticia. While still on the ground we saw half of our luggage going back into the terminal while three more people were added to the plane. We naturally raised some questions, but were told to calm ourselves, our luggage would be on the next flight. Seemingly the three people added were more important than a few suitcases and something had to give since we would be over weight if nothing was done. Anyway we left for Leticia sans a lot of clothing and, even worse,

collecting equipment. The next day was Saturday and we found that our clothes and equipment had arrived but was locked up waiting for the agent who was away for the weekend! We tried other airline personnel but nothing worked, so we made do for two days.

Anne said my clothes were cool but didn't fit very well, and we all admitted we were oddly dressed. We tried buying clothes, but most of us were larger than the locals, so had to make do. We finally got our luggage, but some good airplane clothes were never the same again. The Leticia stay had its moments, but the return trip was the most interesting. When we were clearing immigration to leave Bogota the anemic girl passed out again. Much excitement. The airport personnel said she couldn't get on the plane without a doctor's OK. We said, "Fine, then none of us go". After considerable arm waving and arguing we convinced the Latin airline that all the girl needed was more air, so they loaded her into the airplane, along with the rest of us, and brought out the oxygen equipment. To make a long story short, none of the oxygen equipment worked, so they gave up and started the plane. As soon as the plane was pressurized, our girl was OK. All went well thereafter, except that Anne and I gained a few more gray hairs.

Two years later, Anne and I had recovered enough to attempt another trip, only to find that tourists and drugs had found Leticia and that the airfare was about \$2000 per person. Thus our Amazon excursions ended.