

in the drift

The NABS Newsletter



Lots going on in the PIP committee

NABS has a new web page! As this intro blurb is typically the last thing we get around to before the newsletter goes out, it is a bit too late to connect this issue to the new page. But look forward to a new distribution system next time! For now, thanks again to Walter and Dolly for posting *in the drift* on the Dodds lab webpage (<http://tiny.cc/TDnde> - copy and paste to connect); and thanks to Antoine Morin for sending the pdf to the NABS e-list.

On the same topic: the new benthos.org site needs a web editor. This time around, it is a paid position! Check the Bulletin for the full job announcement now, and spread the word...

Meanwhile, there has been a lot of other activity in the PIP (Public Information and Publicity) Committee—

the overseer of the newsletter. First: thanks to everyone who answered to our plea for newsletter help in the last issue! We were pleased just to know that we actually have a readership, and we were even more thrilled that folks are willing to help. We've added new blood in the form of Teresa Tibbets, and she boldly has taken on the task this issue of putting together the *JNABS* article spotlight. She did a fantastic job, and Julie and Deb are very psyched that she joined us. Don't forget: anyone can contribute, so if you've got a newsworthy idea, don't hesitate to contact us: debra.finn@eawag.ch.

Finally: the PIP will be overseeing the development of a NABS entry on Wikipedia! Meredith Wright has agreed to take the lead on this new project. Look out: once we are wiki-ed, anything can happen!



issue 5:
Summer 2009

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Did you know... ? (if you didn't, check the Summer Bulletin on the website!)

- The 2010 annual meeting will be held jointly with ASLO in beautiful Santa Fe, NM. Mark your calendars for June 6-11!
- Have you seen our new website? If not, check out www.benthos.org to see the new look...
- If you're reading this bulletin then we assume you already subscribe to the BENTHOS listserver, but if not, check out benthos.org for instructions.
- NABS has a new 5-year strategic plan that will soon be available to view on the website. It

includes plans to improve our identity and name recognition, provide more effective outreach to the public, and become a key resource in informing science-based management and policy decisions.

- In case you missed this year's NABS awards in Grand Rapids, the Award of Excellence went to Dave Allen, the Distinguished Service Award to Judy Li, the Environmental Stewardship Award to Chris Yoder, and the



Dave at his address—
courtesy
Mark Wetzel

Hynes Award for New Investigators went to Brian Roberts. Congratulations!!

- Students interested in applying for 2010 NABS endowment awards: applications are due February 10, 2010.
- There is a new draft NABS policy on economic and population growth. It states, in part, that policies should leave a margin of error when dealing with the environment.

benthos.org

JNABS article spotlight: Shredders in Malaysia

Yule, Leong, Liew, Ratnarajah, Schmidt, Wong, Pearson, and Boyero, *JNABS* 28: 404-415

How important are shredders to tropical streams? Well, previous studies of streams in tropical regions have reported a scarcity of invertebrate shredders compared to temperate counterparts. These results have led to a generalization that shredders are not as important to stream function in tropical systems. However, Cathy Yule, the lead author of this issue's *JNABS* spotlight, found this generalization to be wrong for highland streams in Malaysia. "What we found was that far from being rare, invertebrate shredders were often abundant – and sometimes very large indeed", says Yule. Considering what her team found, "very large" doesn't quite paint the whole picture.



Cathy Yule and coauthor Kat Schmidt at the top of a waterfall on a stream in the Cameron Highlands.

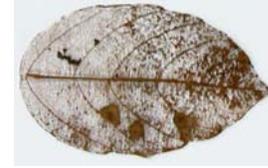
easy to find pristine streams", notes Yule. "But when we got there most of the streams had been destroyed by tea plantations, market gardens and rubbish dumping. We hadn't brought a map with us, because during the communist insurgency maps were restricted to the

Malayan military, and accurate topographic maps are still difficult to obtain."

After six hours of searching, scaling rock faces, climbing waterfalls, and dodging barbed-wire fences with 'Danger High Voltage' signs, the team's effort was rewarded. Yule comments, "The samples were brilliant – a menagerie of fabulous shredders, with lots of temperate insect groups enjoying the cool aerated waters". This description is not typical of what comes to mind when thinking about tropical streams. Neither was the diverse shredder assemblage of nemourids, limnephilids, lepidostomatids and tipulids that Yule and her coauthors found in upland Malaysian streams.

The low altitude streams in Taman Negara, Malaysia's largest national park, was where it really got interesting. Some of these streams had huge, voracious leaf-shredding snails, which had not been previously observed in Malaysian streams. "Wherever we saw skeletonized leaves in the

streams we knew the snails would be there. One big river supported three different species all busy breaking down the leaves."



A shell from one of the immense leaf-shredding snails (*Brotia* spp.) found in the Malaysian lowlands.

The giant shredding snails were not the only surprise for Yule – the other major shredders included large crabs and amphibious cockroaches. "The first of our students to study the shredders was Lavy, who happens to be roach phobic, so she was not impressed when we set up a lovely cockroach aquarium in the lab. Since these early studies, we have spread our nets across to Borneo, where two other students Tajang and Dyanna found a cockroach in one of the leaf packs that was 7 cm long!" There could be worse things to imagine scurrying in a leaf pack, but not many.

This project, partially funded by the National Geographic Committee for Research and Exploration, is part of a worldwide study - led by Luz Boyero and Richard Pearson at James Cook U. - comparing the ecology of tropical and temperate streams. Yule has lived in the tropics since 1989, after moving from Australia to Bougainville Island in Papua New Guinea for her Ph.D. research. Yule and her family's "idyllic island life" was cut short after a secessionist rebellion after which they lived in Borneo for 5 years where they be-friended an orangutan named Dolly. Yule has been in Malaysia at the Kuala Lumpur Campus of Monash University (Australia's largest) since 1999.



Shredder sampling in Taman Negara involved daily travel by long boat.

Many of us face challenges when looking for new study streams and access to sampling sites. But for the team of researchers looking for pristine high altitude streams in the Malaysian highlands, including students Mun Yi Leong, KC Liew, Lavy Ratnarajah, Kat Schmidt, and Hooi Ming, it was more than challenging. "When we went up to Cameron Highlands, a popular tourist resort in the mountains, we thought that it would be



Selection of Malaysian shredders (L to R): caddisflies—*Calamoceratidae* and *Lepidostomatidae*, stonefly—*Nemouridae*, beetle larva—*Eulichadidae*, and an amphibious cockroach—*Blattodea*.

Pam's JNABS corner



In this issue, Pam tells us how JNABS is working to stimulate and facilitate communication of new ideas, methods, or knowledge. In response to author requests, J-NABS is adding 2 new types of articles to provide authors with opportunities for rapid communication. Submit articles through AllenTrack—and contact Pam for more info (psb3@psu.edu).

Two new types of articles for JNABS

- **Comments**—substantive comments, criticisms, or corrections related to articles previously published in JNABS during the previous year
- **FastTrack**—Short papers with the potential for immediate impact (scientific, applied, management, or policy issues) and the most rapid turn around time possible (<16 wk)

Comments

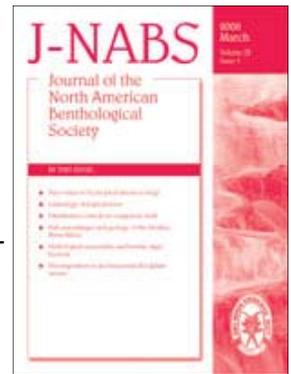
- Brief (≤3 journal pages) with no tables or figures—this translates to < 12 manuscript pages from title page to the last reference (typed, double-spaced, 12-pt font)
- Peer reviewed, and the author(s) of the original article will

have an opportunity to publish a response

- When possible, Comments and Responses will be published simultaneously
- FastTracked to offer the most rapid possible publication

FastTrack

- ≤8 journal pages and must be accompanied by a cover letter justifying the need for rapid publication
- Manuscripts should be <24 pages from title page to the last figure (typed, double-spaced, 12-pt font)
- Editorial procedures identical to regular manuscripts except that all time frames will be shortened to permit publication within 16 weeks
- Articles will be identified as FastTrack in the online and printed Tables of Contents of the journal and will be designated as Open Access



Benthology and artistic expression —Part 2

High in the Willamette River basin above Corvallis, OR (a town that annually celebrates DaVinci and the art/science connection) lies the Andrews Experimental Forest / LTER. Yes, 'Long Term Ecological Research' of course. But now there is another 'LTER' in the Andrews: it stands for 'Long Term Ecological Reflections.' At 7 years strong, this new LTER brings creative writers together with scientists for an added dimension to place-oriented, long-term learning.

NABster Jim Sedell (co-author of the RCC, which was conceived in part on Lookout Creek in the Andrews) was a driving force in establishing the pro-

The LTEReflections home page:
<http://tiny.cc/zMNcS>
Selected products of the LTER:
<http://tiny.cc/xrgMP>

gram. On a walk to lunch, Sedell and Kathleen Dean Moore (environmental essayist and distinguished professor of philosophy at Oregon State U.) lamented that scientists often lack the language essential for communicating with the public. "We need new metaphors!" they decided. "Society makes a commitment to LTER sites to generate learning," Sedell says. "Can't learning

be accomplished more fully by including the humanities?" This argument is the general premise under which Moore and Sedell obtained funding - primarily through the US Forest Service - to partner the two LTER programs: Research and Reflections.

The Reflections component took inspiration from a 200-year log decomposition plot in the Andrews - and a centerpiece of the program's mission is to allow a similar time frame for writers to experience and reflect upon the forests, streams, and associated research of the area. The creative products thus far (see links at left!) certainly have added some of those prized metaphors lacking in the science alone: the fleeting forms and boundaries of a stream ("Listening to Water" by Robin Kimmerer), perspectives on human death inspired by decomposing logs ("return of the dead log people" by Jerry Martien), even hope and humility as an essential part of science ("The Long Haul" by Robert Michael Pyle).

The poems and essays result directly from the writers' independent experience of the place and interpretation of the science. Kimmerer learned about



Jim Sedell (left) and poet/essayist Charles Goodrich discuss the meaning of "watershed health" during a Spring Creek event at the Andrews. Photo by Michael Furniss.

the hyporheic zone, and Pyle was awed by what he termed the "faith" involved in planning research to last well beyond one's lifetime. Following several organized workshops linking scientists and writers, Sedell is thrilled by the similarities between the two groups. "Poets sit around the campfire and argue heatedly about words the way that we bicker about statistical methods at a conference!" Another striking similarity is the group effect: both science and creative writing prosper via these idea exchanges: around the campfire, at a meeting, in the field, ...

(Continued on page 4, lower right)

NABS 2009 in Grand Rapids a grand success!

Not bad for a recession year: NABS 09 in Grand Rapids had 871 attendees.

Lectures with no slides: a new trend? In his presidential address, Nick Aumen suggested that many of us are probably “poly-influential” and therefore possess the power and influence to accomplish meaningful change. Plenary speaker Paul Ehrlich talked about his latest book and was impressed with NABS for meeting his request: “I want to have a hangover when I talk.” Both captivated the crowd *sans* slides.

Maybe slides are still cool: In his Award of Excellence address, Dave Allan described his life from scientist to steward as a “braided river” and emphasized natural beauty as an important theme in conservation—which cannot be expected to be successful with a sole focus on ecosystem services. With around

90-something slides, Dr. Allan convinced the “next” NABS generation to collaborate, practice cross-disciplinarity, and be flexible in our career paths.

Noel Hynes remembered: Art Benke commemorated a father of our field, who was twice nearly sunk by German U-boats (no kidding!) and still got his PhD by age 23. Hynes: “Don’t be afraid to be wrong.” This is how science progresses. Science is inherently self-reparable!

Distinguished Service Award: An inspirational Judy Li proclaimed, “I love being a stream ecologist!”

New prez for 2009-10: Nancy Tuchman has taken the reigns, with Steve Franconer her ex-com chair.

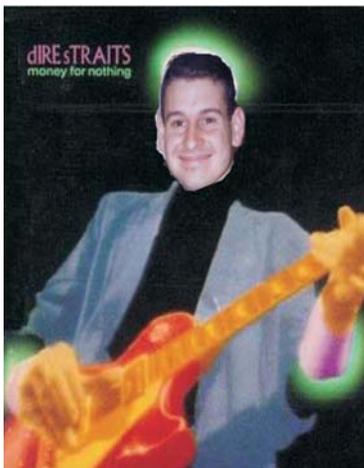
Ex-Secretary. Lucinda Johnson left the NABS Secretary position last year and has now moved to even bigger things: she is our president-elect.

“Idolized” by Nick Aumen: his ex-com chair, Mike Paul. At the business lunch, Mike updated us re: the myriad accomplishments of the ex-com during the past year. The list is too long to post here, so be sure to check the latest Bulletin for specifics.

Thanks! The Local Arrangements (including Mark Luttenton, Mary Ogden, and many volunteers) and Program Committees put on a fantastic meeting this year in Grand Rapids. I have no doubt that we all left feeling completely reinvigorated!



“Leaving one world behind for the other...” is the title of Bill Perry’s award-winning photo in the 2009 contest. It and other top photos from NABS 2009 will be featured in the joint NABS-ASLO 2011 calendar. Meanwhile, don’t forget to order the 2010 calendar, now available from Freshwaters Illustrated (contact Jeremy Monroe: jeremy@freshwatersillustrated.org). Proceeds go to NABS programs and endowments!



Ron Hellenthal starred in ‘Money for Nothing’ and several other money-related hits, thanks to a quirky slide-show by Kim Haag commemorating the many years Ron chaired the Finance Committee. He has now retired from the post. Thanks for all the hard work, Ron!



Walter Dodds rocked the harp at the after-banquet party, joining the Michigander blues band ‘Step-pin’ In It on a few numbers (photo by Blanca Ríos). Not to be outdone, the NABS traditional music circle also got together for their customary jam in the hallway.

(Continued from page 3: *Benthology and Art 2*)

Sedell himself has a written product of an LTER event – the essay ‘Science Tribes on Mount St. Helens’ – which reflects on the massively changed landscape of the volcano, elaborates on the group (‘tribe’) theme, and advocates engaged storytelling as an essential component of science. Yes, storytelling. There is no excuse for dull science, he contends. Perhaps we should get motivated by these writers: let’s make our benthology as exciting in writing as it is in the field!