

Kentucky Lepidopterist

Newsletter of the Society of Kentucky Lepidopterists

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THE SOCIETY OF KENTUCKY LEPIDOPTERISTS

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Loran Gibson - 2008*
Richard Henderson - 2008*
* term expires

The Society of Kentucky

Lepidopterists is open to anyone with an interest in the Lepidoptera of the State of Kentucky.

Membership dues are annual: \$12.00, and can be sent to the Treasurer: Les Ferge, (see above).

2005 Annual Meeting In Lexington, KY

By
Kevin Segebarth

The 2005 Annual Meeting of the Society of Kentucky Lepidopterists was held at the University of Kentucky in Lexington on November 18-19. The event began on Friday with several members gathering at the UK Entomology Department to view the collections, work on specimen identification, and share stories from the year's lep adventures with one another.

Friday evening, a reception was hosted at the E. S. Goodbarn by Dr. Michael Sharkey and Dr. Robert Obrycki, where once again, they made the Society feel most welcome. More friendships were renewed while partaking of tasty refreshments provided by the hosts. Those present were then treated to a couple of very enjoyable slide shows. Dr. Covell gave us a presentation that he had prepared on "Butterflies of Florida", and Bill Black shared photos and stories from the expedition that he and Nancy made to Tanzania earlier this year.

Saturday morning, members gathered at the Entomology Department where the collections were once again opened for use. Much more identifying, fellowshiping, and tale telling occurred throughout the morning. Some of the highlights of this time included viewing and hearing about the *Papaipema speciosissima* and *P. nepheleptina* specimens that were found in Western Kentucky in October, and viewing and hearing about the success that Jim Vargo has been having digitally photographing his collection of microlepidoptera. Many of Jim's photos appear on the Moth Photographer's Group website: www.mothphotographersgroup.com The Executive Board meeting was also held from 10:45 to Noon.

The afternoon session began with out-going president, Jack Dempwolf, calling the annual business meeting to order. Election of officers was first on the agenda, and the results were: President – Dr. Jeffrey Marcus; Treasurer – Les Ferge; Field Trip Coordinator – Bill Black; Editor – Craig Segebarth; Secretary – Kevin Segebarth; Members at Large – Loran Gibson and Richard Henderson. Jack then presented the idea of the addition of a new board position – "board member *ex officio*" – to be occupied by Dr. Covell. Unanimous approval was given by vote of the members present to create this new position, and to amend the constitution, if necessary, to allow for such. (Editor's note: a copy of the amended constitution will appear in the next newsletter.)

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The Treasurer's Report (see page #6) was then presented and approved by the membership, after which Jack turned the meeting over to new president Jeff Marcus. Jeff's first action was to call up Dr. Covell for the presentation of the Carl Cornett Award to Jack Dempwolf for his years of service as president of the Society, as well as his numerous and valuable contributions to the study of Lepidoptera over the past many years.

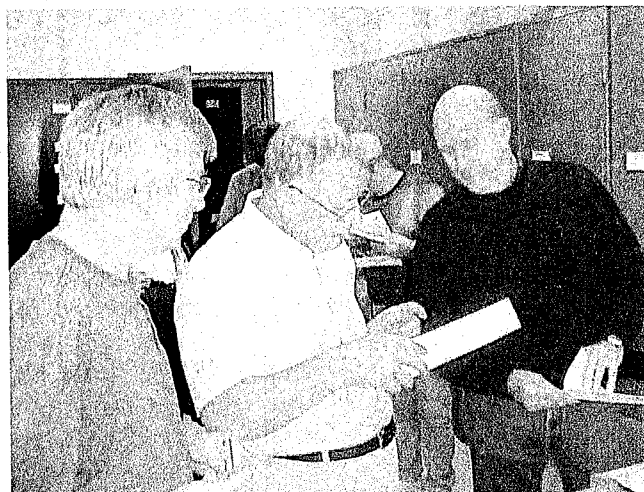


Dr. Covell presenting Jack Dempwolf with the Carl Cornett Award

This year's featured speaker was Dr. Charles V. Covell, Jr., whose address was entitled "Life After Louisville: The McGuire Center for Lepidoptera and Biodiversity." Other talks given were: "Molecular phylogenetics and the evolution of mimicry in viceroyes [*Basilarchia (Limenitus) archippus archippus*] and related butterflies" by Dr. Jeffrey Marcus, Western Kentucky University; "Polyphenisms in Lepidoptera" by Yuichiro Suzuki, Duke University; and "On-line Implementation of the Kentucky Lepidoptera Database" by Dr. Jeffrey Marcus. (Please see "Letter from the President" on this page and the next for information regarding the website and database.)

The final item of the afternoon was the ever-popular door prize drawing, which was, once more, masterfully presided over by the ever-popular Dr. Charles V. Covell, Jr.

The weekend meeting was topped off by dinner together at the Bangkok House, where plenty of good food, warm conversation, and friendly laughter were enjoyed by all. This year's annual meeting was indeed a most profitable and pleasurable event.



Jonathan, Dr. Covell, & Loran id moths in U.K. lab

Letter from the President

Dear Fellow Lepidopterists,

Let me begin my first letter to the membership of the Society by publicly thanking my predecessor, Jack Dempwolf, for the extraordinary job he did as President of this organization. Under Jack's leadership, the society has survived the most potentially disruptive event in its history—the retirement of Society founder Charlie Covell, and the associated transfer of the Kentucky Lepidoptera collection from the University of Louisville to the University of Kentucky. We all owe a great debt to Jack and Charlie (and to Leroy Koehn, Mike Sharkey, and John Obrycki) for a successful transfer of the collections, and the perhaps unprecedented occasion of the Wildcats lying down with the Cardinals in peace and harmony.

For those of you who have not met me, I should probably introduce myself. Professionally, I am an Assistant Professor of Biology at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, where I teach Undergraduate Genetics, and where I conduct research on the genetics, development, and evolution of lepidopteran color patterns. I grew up in New York State, I spent 11 years getting my degrees at Cornell, Cambridge, and Duke, and I have lived in Kentucky with my wife, Joanne Seiff (and our two dogs, Harry and Sally), since 2003. My training as a scientist did not emphasize field entomology, so I am still very much in the learning stage as far as specimen identification goes, but one of the attractions for me about being a Lepidopterist is that there is so much to learn, even for the most experienced among us! One of the great things about this organization is that it

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provides of many opportunities for all of us to learn from each other. A primary focus of my presidency will be to make the Society of Kentucky Lepidopterists more accessible to new members, particularly young people. It is important that we act now to ensure that there will be future generations of Kentucky Lepidopterists who will carry on the important studies of butterflies and moths in the Commonwealth. A key component of my strategy for doing this will be to develop our society's web site:

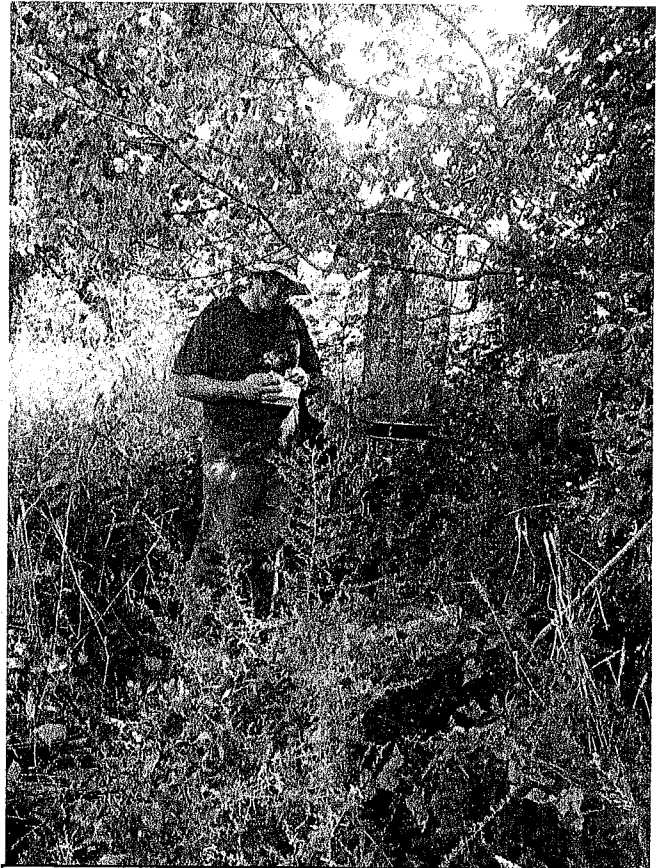
<http://asm.wku.edu/faculty/Marcus/KYLeps.html>

into a resource that will not only be useful to current members, but which will also serve as a publicity and recruiting tool for new members. The national Lepidopterists' Society attracts the majority of its new members through its web site, and I hope that our web site will become an important source of new members for us. In particular, I would like to do some more outreach to butterfly gardeners and to the camera and binocular crowd. There are many ways to appreciate the Lepidoptera and I would like practitioners of all varieties to feel welcome in our organization. However, our web site will also include resources for the specimen collectors who have been the backbone for our organization for its entire history. Included in the web site is a mechanism to report catches of specimens to be added to our database. Search functions for the database will be added over the next few months. The username and password to log into the database section of the site are the Genus and species names, respectively, of our society mascot. If you have trouble with the database, drop me an email and I will try to help you.

Finally, I would like to thank Leroy Koehn for his years of service as editor of the Kentucky Lepidopterist. I know we all wish him much success in his new job in North Carolina and we will miss his skills, enthusiasm, and jokes (well, maybe not the jokes). I further want to thank Craig Segebarth for his willingness to take on the editorship of the Kentucky Lepidopterist newsletter. It is an important job, it will not be an easy job, and Craig and his family deserve our complete support in this endeavor. All sorts of interesting things happen to us in our pursuit (both figuratively and literally) of Lepidoptera and the rest of the membership wants to know about your experiences. Reports of encounters with law enforcement personnel are of particular interest (Gerald—this means you!). Please consider writing up your observations or recollections for the Newsletter and submit them to Craig for inclusion.

I wish you all Happy Holidays, and I look forward to the next opportunity when we will be able to get out into the field again together.

Jeff Marcus



Dr. Jeffery Marcus "in the field" at the Bunge site on the Mississippi River

Summer Field Meeting in Morehead Kentucky

By
Loran Gibson

The summer 2005 field meeting of The Society of Kentucky Lepidopterists was held in the Morehead, Kentucky area and included locations in Rowan, Bath, and Menifee Counties, mostly in the Daniel Boone National Forest.

Officially, the group met at the Ramada Inn at exit 137 of Interstate 64 in Morehead on Friday evening, 8 July. A few of us arrived earlier in the day in order to look for good mothing locations. By 6:00 p.m. several likely light trap spots had been scouted and it was time to meet with our host Al Smith ("aka" Jonathan, which he prefers).

A number of light traps were set out along Clack Mountain Road and in other interesting habitats near Cave Run Lake. Leroy Koehn and Loran Gibson set up sheet light rigs in the remnant grassland habitats (Continued on pg. #4)

along KY. Rt 1274 in Rowan County. These sheet light sessions have become the traditional focus of our nightly socializing during field meetings. Occasionally, a few moth specimens are captured as well.



Everyone enjoys Leroy's sheet rig in Morehead KY

In addition to Jonathan Smith, Leroy Koehn, and Loran Gibson, those present included: Bill Black, Kevin, Craig, and Ian Segebarth, Gerald Burnett, Ellis Lauder milk, Denny Currutt and his son Kevin, and new member Bruce Franciscy from Winchester, KY. Although few interesting moths were seen, our Friday night mothfest was enjoyable and gave us all a chance to talk and laugh with friends. After breakfast at the Ramada Inn, the group scattered throughout the area to retrieve moth traps and to sort the catch. The temperature was very warm and shade was a necessity. Sorting the traps took a substantial amount of time. Some of the best moths included: *Hyparpax aurora*, the pink and yellow notodontid and *Noctua pronuba*, the European noctuid, both in one of the grassland traps; and, *Argillophora furcilla*, an *Arundinaria* feeder from a cane break near the Fish Hatchery below Cave Run Dam. By the time the traps were sorted the heat of the day had set in. With the hot, dry weather, few butterflies were seen. In the afternoon everyone returned to Morehead for a cook-out at Jonathan's house. The meal of burgers, hot-dogs, and trimmings was prepared by Jonathan's friend, Dave Radez. It was a welcome way to get out of the heat and enjoy the company.

At Jonathan's house we were joined by Professor Sean O'Keefe and his wife Jan, both who work at Morehead State University. Other Saturday arrivals included: Charles Wright and Mary Hamilton, and Jim Vargo. Afternoon departures included Leroy Koehn and the Currutts, and Bill Black. The remaining group headed for a good collecting area on the west side of Cave Run Lake for Saturday night moth collecting.

Loran set up his sheet along Zilpo Road in the Daniel Boone National Forest in Bath County. A few light traps were also set along this road. The summer heat and humidity took a toll on moth diversity and few good species were seen! Loran's generator ran out of gasoline fairly early in the evening but, Jim Vargo, who had set up a sheet just down the road, saved the night with spare fuel. Thanks Jim!! The most memorable critter at the moth light was a large Copperhead pit viper that crawled out of the woods a few feet from Loran's light. The sound of the snake's nervously twitching tail attracted Jonathan, who thought it was a large moth fluttering in the leaves. His astonishment was evident when he learned the true source of the noise! Luckily, no one was bitten!

Although this field meeting produced few species of interest, the comradeship was great! With better weather, this area of the state can be an excellent spot for both moths and butterflies. Maybe we should try it again sometime during *Papaiperna* season.

Many thanks to Jonathan Smith for his hard work and excellent hospitality!

Fall Field Meeting in Western Kentucky

By
Loran Gibson

The Kentucky Lepidopterists enjoyed another great field trip to western Kentucky during the weekend of 9-11 September, 2005. Our trip was led by Bill Black, and much of the activity centered around the Paducah home of Bill and Nancy Black. As usual, the hospitality provided by Bill and Nancy was exemplary!

Field activities began on Friday afternoon, 9 September, at 4:00 p.m. CDST. Members present included Charlie Covell, Bill Black, Jeff Marcus, Richard Henderson, Gerald Burnett, Kevin and Ian Segebarth, and Loran Gibson. We all met with unusual promptness at the BP gas station on the north side of Interstate Highway 24 at exit 31. This location is in Livingston County. Bill introduced us to Shelly Morris, who works for The Nature Conservancy. She is responsible for managing the recently created Bissell Bluff Preserve, near the center of Livingston County. Bill and Shelly explained that our goal for the evening was to place blacklight traps at several locations in the preserve. Data gleaned from these samplings will be used to create a baseline list of

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moths for the location. In addition, we would also record as many butterfly and skipper species as possible from the area. While we were gathered in the BP parking lot, an *Agraulis vanillae* (Gulf Fritillary) flew by. This was promptly spotted by Charlie Covell and others and represented a new Livingston County record for this species.

Over a dozen blacklight traps were set at several locations on the Bissell Bluffs property. With the traps deployed, we drove back to Bill Black's home for food and conversation. A fine buffet of delicious food was provided by Nancy Black and Eileen Segebarth. We ate and talked well into the night of Lepidoptera and lepidopterists. Charlie's stories of some of the late pioneers of American lepidopterology held everyone's interest until the group finally tired out after midnight.

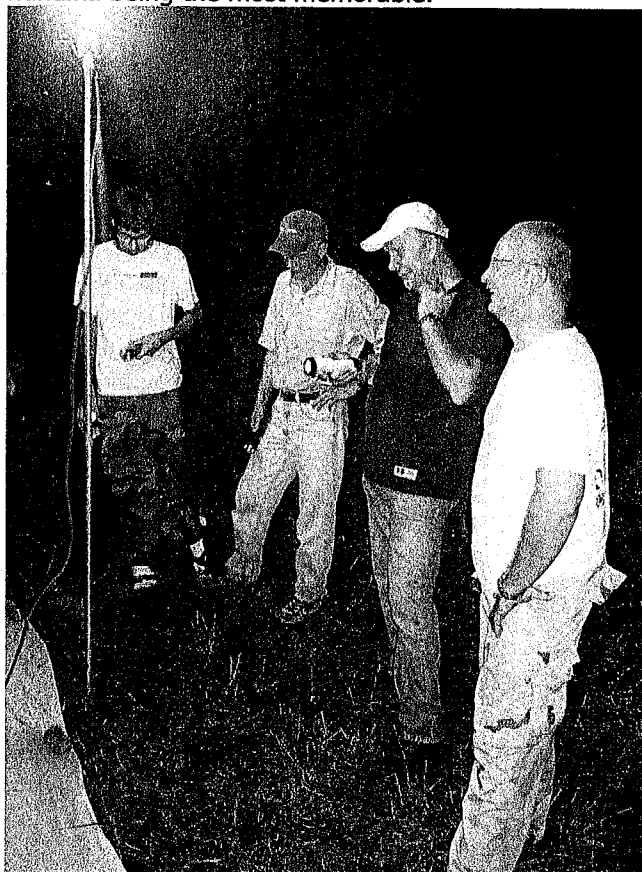
On Saturday morning we met at the Paducah Days Inn. Again, the group was uncharacteristically prompt, and we were soon on our way to collect the traps that had been set at the Bissell Bluffs site.

The many blacklight traps provided a substantial number of moth species for the Bissell Bluffs survey. A dozen species of *Catocala* including *C. robinsoni*, *C. maestosa*, *C. resecta*, *C. vidua*, *C. flebilis*, *C. obscura*, *C. piatrix*, *C. amatrix*, *C. palaeogama*, *C. neogama*, *C. nebulosa* were found. A couple of *Papaipema* were taken with *P. araliae* being the best catch of that genus. Several Arctiidae were present including *Grammia parthenice intermedia*, *G. oithona*, *Cisthene packardii*, *C. plumbea*, and *C. kentuckiensis*. These are a few of the larger and showier species. A complete list will take some time to generate, but should help with understanding how to better manage the site.

Our next locality to visit was the Littleville colony of *Euphyes dukesi*. The colony was still thriving although some excavation of the adjacent lot this summer substantially reduced the availability of nearby nectar sources. Most individuals seen were still within the wet woods where the *Carex* host plant grows, and along the wet ditch that drains the area. Nectar sources present last year but lost to excavation this year were large numbers of Tickseed Sunflowers (*Bidens aristosa*) and other flowers. The wet ditch still had a few plants of Late Thoroughwort (*Eupatorium serotinum*) on which *dukesi* was abundant. A few individuals were observed nectaring on Knotweed (*Polygonum* sp.) that had become the most common plant in the excavated lot.

Late on Saturday afternoon we returned to Bill's and Nancy's house for refreshments. As evening approached, our caravan of vehicles drove east to the

Land-Between-the-Lakes Recreation Area. Few records of moths and butterflies have been reported for this large, fairly pristine area. In hopes of finding good moth diversity, we set up two sheets along a gravel road on the eastern edge of the LBL in southern Lyon County. Over a hundred species of moths were recorded with *Papaipema araliae*, *P. birdi* and *Schinia nundina* being the most memorable.



Ian, Kevin, Loran, & Gerald at a sheet in LBL

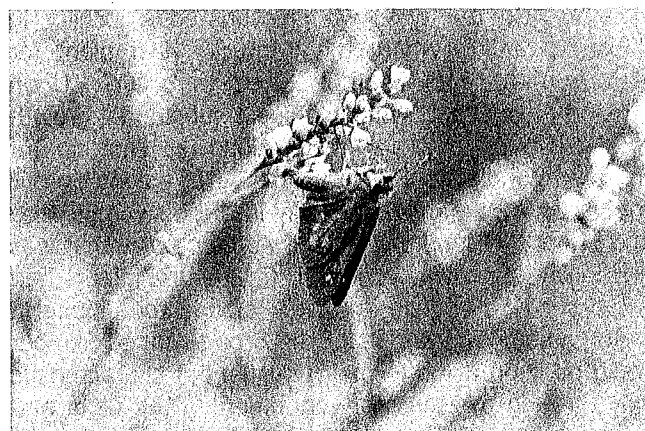
On Sunday morning we assembled once again at Paducah Days Inn. Our caravan then headed south toward the well-known butterfly localities in Fulton County. On our way, we investigated a locality in Hickman County where the Kentucky host plant for *Poanes viator* had been reported to occur. Upon arriving at the spot we could see a substantial growth of Marsh millet or Water millet along the east side of the road paralleling a wet slough. After pulling on our rubber boots, we made our way into the swampy area and promptly found a colony of *Poanes viator* that was previously unknown. The tall, Cat-tail like plants had established a dense growth along the sluggish watercourse. Individuals of the Broad-winged Skipper could be seen flying in their unusual but characteristic way through this mass of vegetation. Their flight and behavior are similar to that of the Least Skipper (*Ancyloxypha numitor*), but individuals are much, much larger!

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Along with Marsh millet we found a few good stands of Climbing Hempweed (*Mikania scandens*). This flowering vine is well known in Kentucky as a good butterfly and skipper nectar source. A few *P. viator* were collected on flowers and in and around host plants. We were pleased to find another good colony of Broad-winged Skippers on a plant that is considered to be threatened by the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission. Three colonies of *P. viator* have been discovered within the last two years. Learning the host plant and finding locations where this plant occurs has been instrumental in discovering new colonies of the skipper. Finding new locations for *P. viator* would have been much more difficult without the help of Ellis Laudermilk and Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission maps showing locations where the host plant is known to occur. Only a few locations remain in Kentucky where Marsh millet may still be found. Hopefully, this fine native plant and the large skipper that requires the plant for food can remain with us for a long time as parts of one of our most threatened ecosystems!



New *P. viator* site in Hickman Co. KY



Poanes viator,
photograph by Ian Segebarth

From Hickman County we made our way back into Fulton County and on to the Mississippi River levee in Hickman. Here, Bill Black had set out bait traps and several bait buckets in hopes of attracting Viceroy X Red-spotted-purple hybrids. Large numbers of Viceroy individuals had found the bait along with a few Red-spotted-purple individuals. Lots of other nymphalids were attracted to bait as well. No hybrids were seen this year. A large number of species were present along the levee, especially Pierids. As usual, the following species were present: *Pontia protodice*, *Pieris rapae*, *Colias eurytheme*, *Zerene cesonia*, *Phoebis sennae*, *Eurema lisa*, *E. nicippe*, and *Nathalis iole*. Typically, these species are all present in this area during our September meetings. Few localities in Kentucky can match this diversity of Pieridae in such a small area.

The last few hours of Sunday were spent in the Reelfoot area in southern Fulton County. Here we saw a few more *Poanes viator*, *P. yehl*, and a few *Euphyes dion*. We finished the field meeting by making species lists for the Fulton County locations. Another memorable field trip came to an end.

Treasurer's Report

Statement of Cash Flows for the Period 21 November 2004 thru 18 November 2005

Balance on 21 November 2004

Checking Account	\$3,310.46
Petty Cash	<u>\$9.82</u>
TOTAL	\$3,320.28

Cash Receipts

Dues received	\$1,055.00
Cash donations at meeting	\$59.00
Donations from Mammoth Cave research	\$834.56
Proceeds from Yin-Rei Hicks prints	<u>\$15.00</u>
TOTAL	\$1,963.56

Cash Disbursements

Meeting refreshments	\$92.19
Keynote speaker expenses	\$168.20
Postage	\$2.54
Newsletter No. 4, 2004	\$245.39
Newsletter No. 1, 2005	\$296.71
Newsletter No. 2, 2005	\$190.10
Newsletter No. 3, 2005	<u>\$105.63</u>
TOTAL	\$1,100.76

Balance on 18 November 2005

Checking Account	\$4,527.82
Petty Cash	<u>\$19.16</u>
TOTAL	\$4,546.98

Net Increase **\$862.80**

2005 Membership Data

pd 2007	4
pd 2006	7
pd 2005	63
PAID	74
Not pd 2005	27
gratis	4
TOTAL	105

Estimated Income For 2006

Dues 75 members @ \$12.00	\$900.00
Donations	<u>\$75.00</u>
TOTAL	\$975.00

Estimated Expenses For 2006

4 Newsletters/year@ \$250.00	\$1,000.00
Meeting/keynote speaker expenses	\$500.00
Misc. (postage, awards)	<u>\$50.00</u>
TOTAL	\$1,550.00

Estimated increase (decrease) **(\$575.00)**

Summary: There is an ample cash reserve in the bank due to excess contributions for the Covell portrait plus the Mammoth Cave donation. There are sufficient funds for greater than usual meeting/speaker expenses. However, 27 members have not paid for 2005. A good portion of these hopefully will pay up if reminded again, which can be done in the next newsletter or with their 2006 billing.

**Society of Kentucky Lepidopterists
Board Meeting Minutes
Nov. 19, 2005**

Present were: Jack Dempwolf, Charlie Covell, Gerald Burnett, Jeff Marcus, Craig Segebarth, John Peacock, Richard Henderson, Loran Gibson, Bill Black, Kevin Segebarth.

1. Composition of new board:

Jack Dempwolf announced his desire to step down as president. Dr. Jeffrey Marcus accepted the board's

nomination to serve as president. Loran Gibson agreed to fill the member at large position vacated by Jeff Marcus. Leroy Koehn has moved to North Carolina and will no longer be able to serve as newsletter editor. Craig Segebarth accepted the nomination of the board to take on this position. Les Ferge was not present, but had earlier communicated to the board his willingness to continue as treasurer. Other officers volunteering to extend their service for an additional year were Bill Black as field trip coordinator and Kevin Segebarth as secretary. Charlie Covell suggested that he vacate his member at large position to make room for someone new. He further offered to serve perpetually as an *ex officio* board member. The question was raised as to whether the constitution would allow for such a position. It was agreed to research this question and pursue amending the constitution if necessary. Richard Henderson accepted the board's nomination to serve as member at large in place of Charlie. The board agreed to present all of the above-mentioned nominations to the membership at the business meeting.

2. Treasurer's Report:

Les Ferge was not present, but had sent his report to the board via email. He requested that no dues be collected at the meeting. He will provide collection envelopes to be included in the next newsletter. Jack Dempwolf will present the treasurer's report to the membership at the business meeting.

3. Field Trips:

Dr. Covell suggested that the annual Oldham County Butterfly Count, held in early July, become a regular event for the Society, expressing his desire for more members to participate. This is a publicized outing, attended by people with a variety of experiences and interests in the natural world (including butterfly watching.) Dr. Covell believes this would be a good thing for the Society to be permanently a part of, and that it could very well be a source of new members.

Other proposed field trips were:

Spring: Mead County, to include Otter Creek Park and possibly a site called Lapland, led by Loran Gibson and Richard Henderson

Summer: Mammoth Cave and Upper Green River Biological Preserve, led by Jeff Marcus

Fall: Paducah and surrounding area, led by Bill Black
Possible "Pick-up Trips": Search for *Catocala atocala* in early August on the Mississippi River bluffs in Western Kentucky; *Papaiperna* hunt in October.

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4. Database:

Jeff Marcus gave an update on the status of the database and website project. He will be giving a presentation and demonstration to the membership in the afternoon business meeting. Jeff reported that the programming cost so far amounts to \$1600, which he estimates to be half of the total amount required to complete the project. He has a commitment from his dean at WKU to match whatever funds can be raised. Jeff requested \$800 from the Society (one fourth of the total cost), committing to raise the remainder himself. Charlie Covell believes the Cornett Fund may be available for this purpose, if not immediately, possibly by August 2006. A vote was taken to authorize the use of funds from the Society of Kentucky Lepidopterists to make up the difference not covered by the Cornett Fund, up to \$800. Unanimous approval was granted.

5. The Collection:

Charlie Covell led a short discussion on the condition of the collection (formerly U of L collection of Lepidoptera now housed at UK), which in his words "needs to be in better shape." The primary need is for the two collections, U of L and UK, to be merged. One of the main challenges is presented by the existence of two different drawer systems: Cornell and California Academy. Charlie expressed his desire to see all Lepidoptera kept in Cornell drawers. He stated that there will likely be a need for volunteers to help with the curating of the collection and asked those present to consider this. He is to be meeting with Dr. Sharkey to discuss the needs and possible ways to address them.

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin Segebarth, Secretary

The Society of Kentucky Lepidopterists
Craig Segebarth, Editor
250 Riverside Dr.
Paducah, KY 42003

Letter From The Editor

First off I would like to thank Leroy Koehn for the great job he has done as our Editor these past years. I will try my best to keep this newsletter up to the high standard that he has set! We will definitely miss him now that he has moved away.

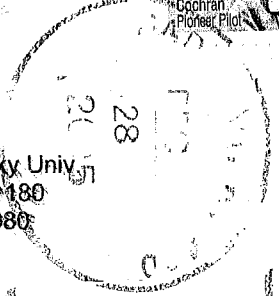
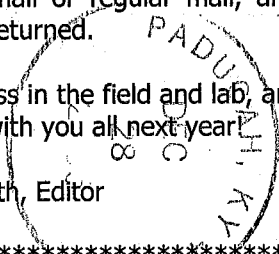
I would like to ask, if not plead for articles to be sent to me for inclusion in the newsletter. Any story or report of your field excursions or lab discoveries will be most welcome! If for some reason there is not room for it in the next newsletter then it will be included in the following one. Also, any pictures of specimens or lepidopterists ☺, that you would like included with an article are welcome.

Articles can be sent to me by e-mail, which I prefer, or regular mail, if needed. (Addresses on the front of newsletter.) If sent by e-mail it is easiest when sent in a Word document or Excel spreadsheet. Pictures can be sent either by e-mail or regular mail, and prints that I receive can be returned.

I wish everyone success in the field and lab, and I look forward to collecting with you all next year!

Craig Segebarth, Editor

The Kentucky Lepidopterist is published four times a year, and dues are \$12.00 annually. The organization is open to anyone with an interest in the Lepidoptera of the State of Kentucky. Information can be obtained from, and dues sent to the Treasurer: Les Ferge, 7119 Hubbard Av., Middleton, WI 53562



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