



VSU Connection

For the Faculty, Staff and Members of the Valdosta State University Community

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Public Enemy Number One

It's that time of year when you walk to your car each morning through a haze of dive bombing mosquitoes, and you feel a bit like Luke Skywalker must have felt when he pilots the x-wing through a hailstorm of laser cannons on his mission to destroy the Death Star.

We asked Dr. Mark Blackmore, VSU biology professor, to explain the science behind mosquitoes blood-sucking behavior and to reveal why so many seem to be buzzing around this year?

Limburger Cheese Eaters BEWARE

U.S. Department of Agriculture research suggests that mosquitoes are attracted to Limburger cheese. The main ingredient in the pungent dairy product is a bacterium found on the human foot, which also emits smells that draw mosquitoes. Interestingly enough, Limburger was first made in The Netherlands by monks who processed the cheese by stomping it with their feet.

According to the American Mosquito Control Association (AMCA), people drinking beer may also find themselves more attractive to mosquitoes than their non-drinking friends. Individuals taking heart, blood pressure and cholesterol-lowering medicines are also mosquito magnets, according to USDA research. Mosquitoes, who need cholesterol and B vitamins to develop eggs, seek out hosts with high levels of the vital elements.

The Year of the Mosquito

"For several years we have had low hatches due to the drought conditions in the spring and summer. Those eggs have been dormant in low-lying flood plains, depressions, ditches and rot holes in trees, for instance, until the right conditions arise," Blackmore said. "We have had sufficient rain this year, so many low sites have been flooded for the first time in several years and the ground is saturated enough to hold water long enough for mosquitoes to hatch."

A Lasting Sting

More than 3,000 species of mosquitoes buzz around this world — about 170 in the United States, and about 30 types call Georgia home. Blackmore said he considers only about five species in the area

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Blackmore oversees sophomore biology student Lauren Williams as she counts and sorts mosquitoes caught in the area as part of VSU's mosquito surveillance program. Since 2001, Blackmore has headed the collection, which is the only program in Southeast Georgia that monitors mosquito populations. VSU sends specimens to the Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Survey lab to test the bugs for diseases.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CDC

Mosquito Bites

- Mosquitoes can fly continuously for 1-4 hrs.
- The average life span of a female mosquito is three to 100 days. Males live about 10 to 20 days.
- One female mosquito may lay 100 to 300 eggs at a time and may average 1,000 to 3,000 offspring during her lifespan.
- Most mosquitoes remain within a 1 to 3 mile radius of where they were born.

Six Candidates Considered for VSU's Next President

The search for Valdosta State University's eighth president has entered the much anticipated campus interview phase.

The presidential search process began in January with more than 85 nominations submitted and reviewed by the 12-member Presidential Search and Screen Committee (PSSC). The committee then narrowed the list to 12 applicants who participated in off-campus interviews in Atlanta on April 11-13.

From that process, the PSSC invited six semi-finalists to participate in on-campus interviews that include meetings with faculty, staff, students and area business and civic leaders. Each candidate will follow the same two-day schedule, including a public forum that is open to individuals from the campus and community.

Dr. Elizabeth Stroble, senior vice president and provost at University of Akron, Ohio, was on campus April 16-17.

The University of Akron is a public research university with an enrollment of more than 24,700 students, 3,500 employees and an annual budget of \$378.5 million. Stroble provides administrative leadership of the academic operation and financial resources. Additionally, she advises the president and vice president of Development on aspects of the University of Akron's \$500 million comprehensive campaign.

The second candidate, **Dr. Greg Weisenstein**, provost and vice president for academic affairs at the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, visited the campus April 17-18. The University of North Dakota is the state's most comprehensive intensive research university, with 12,559 students (fall 2007) offering 193 fields of study from baccalaureate through doctoral

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A Lasting Sting Continued —

to be potential vectors of diseases, such as West Nile and the less prominent, but more serious Eastern equine encephalitis. Instances of EEE are rare — the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirms about five cases each year — but about half of those who survive EEE will have mild to severe neurological damage. About one third of people infected with the viral disease die, making it one of the most deadly mosquito-borne viruses in the country. Blackmore said that both diseases have established themselves in Lowndes County. A little girl in Valdosta came down with EEE about six years ago, and West Nile was discovered in the county in 2001 — three years after the first cases of the disease appeared in the United States. Blackmore said a human vaccine for West Nile is in the test stages, so he anticipates one will be approved for use within three or four years. The CDC states it is unlikely an EEE vaccine will be developed. ■

One Last Mosquito Bite. . .

Homeowner Hints

- Do not let water accumulate in flowerpot saucers or pet dishes for more than two days.
- Dispose or turn over containers such as buckets, old tires and unused plastic swimming pools that may collect water.
- Clean debris from rain gutters.
- Repair leaks or eliminate puddles near faucets and air conditioner units.
- Change water in birdbaths and wading pools at least once each week. Ornamental pool owners should stock up on top-feeding minnows, aptly named “mosquito fish.”
- Drain puddles, tree holes and ditches or fill them with mortar. Drill holes in the bottoms of tire swings so rain water does not collect.
- Check for trapped water in plastic or canvas tarps used to cover boats or pools. Arrange the tarps so that water drains off them.
- Irrigate lawns and flower beds/gardens to prevent water from standing for several days.
- Cut down weeds and regularly mow lawns to eliminate areas for mosquitoes to perch.
- Insecticides may be applied to the lower limbs of shade trees and shrubs to further repel the pesky bugs.

Bug Zapper Wasteland

A Notre Dame University study found that people with bug zappers got bit by mosquitoes 10 percent more than people without the traps. Mosquitoes locate their victims through the detection of carbon dioxide emissions, movement, body odors and temperature, not light. UV light also reflects off surfaces of water, which helps mosquitoes locate stagnant pools of water to they lay their eggs.

A Woman's World

Male mosquitoes do not bite. Female mosquitoes require blood proteins for egg production, but the act serves no nourishment function. The AMCA states that most mosquitoes prefer biting horses, cattle and birds.

To gain energy, both male and female mosquitoes feed on plant nectars.

Got some research to share... send it our way— news@valdosta.edu

Semi-Finalists Continued —

and professional degrees. Weisenstein's recent accomplishments include increasing the statewide, national, and international visibility of the University of North Dakota; working with the student government to establish new programs and initiatives; and establishing ten new academic programs and eight centers.

The remaining four candidates in consideration for the position to replace retiring VSU President Ronald M. Zaccari are:

Dr. Thomas L. Keon, dean of the College of Business Administration at University of Central Florida, Orlando, will visit the campus April 21-22. The University of Central Florida is one of 11 state public universities with an enrollment of 48,699 students (fall 2007) and offers 95 baccalaureate, 97 master's, three specialist and 28 doctoral programs and degrees. As dean of the College of Business Administration, Keon oversees 150 full-time faculty, a budget in excess of \$27 million and 9,200 students. Additional responsibilities include fundraising, where he assisted in raising more than \$35 million in gifts and commitments and added \$24 million to the college's endowment; external and alumni relations; and he serves on numerous university committees.

To view copies of the semi-finalists vitas and detailed schedules of each candidate's two-day interview, visit:
www.valdosta.edu/presidentiaalsearch/

Dr. Patrick J. Schloss, president of Northern State University, Aberdeen, S.D., will visit the campus April 24-25. Northern State University offers 38 major and 42 minor undergraduate degrees, six associate, eight pre-professional, and nine graduate degrees. Schloss initiated a strategic planning process titled the “Margin of Excellence.” The plan focused on institutional priorities including recruitment, retention, and faculty scholarship.”

Dr. Daniel Ball, president of Lander University, Greenwood, S.C., will visit the campus April 28-29. As president, he has authored numerous publications and implemented the university's first strategic plan. Additionally, he initiated Lander's first campaign, which exceeded its \$15 million goal. Formerly he was the vice president for Academic Affairs at Southern Arkansas University and dean of the College of Education at Idaho State University.

Dr. William A. Meehan, president of Jacksonville State University, Ala., will visit the campus April 29-30. As president, he has overseen major campus renovations

and additions totaling more than \$20 million; enrollment has increased 21 percent; and he led the university's largest capital campaign that exceeded its \$17.5 million goal. Ball has held numerous administrative positions at Jacksonville State University including acting vice president for Institutional Advancement and associate vice president for Academic Affairs.

At the conclusion of the campus visits, the PSSC will select five unranked candidates from among the semi-finalists and present these names to the Special Regents' Search Committee, which will make the final selection and appoint VSU's next president. ■

\$26,000! Yes, that is the total raised by participants of the second annual VSU Relay for Life, held April 11-12 on the front lawn. The American Cancer Society recognized the Finance and Administration's “Robin' for a Cure” team and the Freshman Year Experience team for each raising more than \$4,000 for cancer research.

VSUConnection

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The *VSU Connection* is a semimonthly newsletter designed to inform VSU personnel and students about the latest campus-wide news. Check out the *Connection* online at www.valdosta.edu/news/.

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