

WFIWC General Photos

"Does" join the "Bucks". What became known as the Western Forest Insect Work Conference was conceived by 10 entomologists from the U.S and Canada attending a Society of American Foresters meeting in Seattle, Oct. 13, 1949. Although membership was (and is) open to anyone interested in the field of professional forest entomology, males dominated the membership (and the profession) in those early years. I came on the scene in 1950 and have participated in many subsequent meetings. The subject of women members never was an issue. There just weren't any women forest entomologists. When I began looking into the record, I had no recollection of the landmark event, so subtle had it been. Only then did I realize that the "canopy was broken" ... so to speak ... in 1969 at the Coeur d'Alene meeting, which I attended! A spouse or a student may have preceded or coincided with this, but the first woman to attend, and who was employed as an entomologist, was Thelma Finlayson, then on the faculty at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C., Canada. I tracked down Thelma at [<tfinlays@sfu.ca>](mailto:tfinlays@sfu.ca) to get this narrative and photo.



Thelma (Green) Finlayson Thelma was born on June 29, 1914 in Oshawa, Ontario. She attended the University of Toronto, (Honours degree in Biology in 1936) and then attended the Ontario College of Education, obtaining a certificate in 1937 to teach science in secondary school. However, her love of biology pulled her away from the classroom to the laboratory as a volunteer and eventually as the first woman to be hired as a Technical Officer for the Dominion Institute for Biological Control. In 1967, she was one of eight members of the Institute who transferred to the newly created Simon Fraser University to form the Pestology Centre.

I asked how she became interested in entomology and her work. She replied: "In my fourth year at the U. of Toronto, I took a course in Entomology with the eminent E.M. Walker. He did not do any teaching, simply gave me thousands of preserved insects to dissect, and simply left me on my own. So I spent a whole year working on my own and probably learned more entomology than I would have with lectures. This whetted my appetite for these beautiful little creatures."

"I went to the Institute for Biological Control in Belleville, which was near my home, for the summer of 1936 and returned in June 1937 where I remained until 1967. From 1937 to 1955, I worked almost exclusively on parasites of sawflies, mainly the European spruce sawfly, where I did a lot of propagating of parasites and experimenting on how to feed and overwinter them, also ways of shipping them to the field. In 1955, a new

director, Dr. B.P. Beirne, came to the lab and he put me onto the taxonomy of final-instar larvae of parasites. I just loved this work and continued it after I came to Simon Fraser in 1967. My research was mainly on the taxonomy of the final-instar larvae of Ichneumonidae, Aphidiidae and Diptera. Dr. Beirne was a mentor who made me believe I could do good research if given the chance. So, I guess my lifelong research interest happened almost accidentally - as so often happens in other areas of life."

"Dr. Gordon Miller (Thelma's student), worked on the larch casebearer while he was doing a Master's degree; he later became the western regional Director General of the Forestry Department in the federal government in Calgary. We wrote a few papers."(cited below).

Asked for her recollections of the WFIWC, she replied: "I regarded these meetings as the very best meetings that I ever attended - and there were many other entomological society ones. The enthusiasm of the attendees was catching and I recall becoming quite excited by most of the seminars. The meetings were well organized and gave everyone an opportunity to express opinions. The scientists attending the meetings were very friendly and accepted females as part of the "team" - I never felt that I was intruding in a male organization." -- *Malcolm Furniss*

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Ethical Practices Award. So, what was a nice sounding award like you doing after hours at WFIWC meetings from 1954-1984 trying to find a deserving recipient? For you younger ones ... the wording "Ethical Practices" is facetious.

The details of its origin are obscure and references to it in various proceedings hint at rather than document supposed behaviour (Canadian spelling intentional ... MMF) of originating recipients. According to Washburn (SLC 1974 proceedings, p 63), the first award was given to Jim Kinghorn at the 1953 meeting at Moscow-Pullman. However, the Ethical Practices Committee was established at the 1954 Berkeley meeting (proceedings, p. 57), although no record exists of it ever having been formally constituted. According to folklore, the physical emblem of the award was apparel derived from a visit with Tempest Storm backstage at the El Rey burlesque in Oakland. Proceedings of the 1980 El Paso meeting

indicate that the emblem was changed. "Paul Buffam asked Dave Holland to provide new accoutrements of the office, which wore out during long years of service, for the next meeting. ... " Further, by then (1980), the membership had female representation and, indeed, " ... Faye Shon and Maxine Moyer have come up with a suitable award for female members." That evidently derived from the award actually having been earned by Molly Stock (Wemme 1976) and Moyer (Boise 1979)! Again, however, the proceedings shed little light on their standout performances.

The Committee and the award eventually ran its course as the membership and the times continued to morph. So it was that at the 1986 Victoria, B.C., meeting, they ceased to exist. Dave Holland ([proceedings](#) page 49) read a graveside poem "On retiring the Ethical Practices Award." Silver and Kinghorn, among the early instigators ... now departed, may well have smiled. Born in an atmosphere of fun and camaraderie, like all things, it had run its course to be replaced by Fun Runs and Founders Award addresses at banquets grown docile. Not at all like the one at Ogden (1960) where baked potatoes were flung across table between jovial Bongberg, Whiteside and Massey. -- *Mal Furniss* --