

In memory / En souvenir de

The Canadian entomological community lost an enthusiastic and talented member and a unique character on 28 September 2021 with the unexpected passing of Dustin Joseph Hartley at the age of 45. Dustin was born on 15 March 1976 in Drayton Valley, Alberta, where he grew up as the third of four children in a loving family. He graduated from Frank Maddock High School in 1994 and began his university education at Augustana University in Camrose the following autumn. He transferred to the University of Alberta in Edmonton at the start of his 3rd year and lived in Edmonton for the rest of his life. Having brought interest in entomology with him from exposure to David Larson at Camrose, he fell right into happy company among the students working in John Spence's laboratory in Edmonton and decided to become an entomologist.



Dustin Joseph Hartley
(1976-2021)

As an undergraduate he participated widely in field work and insect collecting in Alberta and spent much time at the microscope identifying his beloved beetles. One of his favourite field trips was accompanying Spence and George Ball on beetle collection adventures in Mexico. During his last year of undergraduate study, he became interested and got deeply involved in the international GLOBENET project aimed at investigating the influence of urban-rural gradients on beetle distributions and assemblages. His first co-authored paper (Niemelä et al. 2002), involving work from his undergraduate thesis and printed in the prestigious journal *Landscape Ecology*, resulted from that interest. This initial work, focused on urban woodlands, inspired Dustin to extend the scope of this project to urban grasslands as an MSc project in the Spence lab. Supported by an NSERC post-graduate scholarship, Dustin brought his creativity, talents, quirky imagination and determined focus to this work.

During his graduate student years, Dustin organized and was lead singer in a country/rock band, Pinned, that involved a number of entomology students and post-docs from the University of Alberta. The band was a talented and much-enjoyed group of musicians that played in a number of venues around Edmonton, and who were widely sought out to perform at university functions. Their tune, Goin' Fishing, as written and belted out by Dustin, was a local hit.

Dustin's promising entomological career was complicated suddenly by sudden onset of schizophrenia in 2000. Dustin, his family, friends and co-workers accepted the situation immediately and supported Dustin as he learned to live with the condition through the combination of help from skilled mental health experts in Edmonton and personal grit. The condition slowed output from his entomological studies but Dustin's commitment to the work never wavered as entomology was something in which he found pleasure and purpose, and through which he continued to make valuable contributions. He completed and successfully defended his interesting MSc thesis, 'Impacts of urbanization on western Canadian beetle faunas', in 2003. Eventually the main findings of the thesis were reported in an excellent and most interesting paper printed in *Ecography* (Hartley et al. 2007).

Dustin found new outlets for his considerable talents through employment in entomology that could accommodate the challenges of his disease through work in David Langor's laboratory at the Northern Forestry Centre (NoFC) of the Canadian Forest Service. There, he used and

further developed his ability to make high quality identification of carabid and rove beetles in support of numerous biodiversity studies pursued by Langor and colleagues. During the period between 2008 and his death, Dustin identified well in excess of 100,000 specimens of ground and rove beetles. He was an essential part of the NoFC forest biodiversity team and made many significant contributions to the research program. His work led to various publications, with more posthumous co-authorships to come. During this time, he also developed a strong passion for the rove beetle genus *Stenus*, and frequently expressed a desire to do a PhD thesis focused on the taxonomy of this genus, should his medical challenges allow. His colleagues and friends at NoFC also remember the many great conversations during lunch and coffee breaks on topics ranging from sports to current events and science. Dustin had something to contribute to any conversation, and the more esoteric the better. He loved thoughtful discussions and contributed much information to enrich them, drawn from his wide and eclectic reading. Dustin was hardly ever seen without his well-worn leather cowboy hat that so perfectly complemented his persona. That hat now sits proudly in a place of honour in the insect museum of NoFC, where it reminds those who knew him of a talented and respected colleague and generous and dependable friend.

In addition to entomology, Dustin pursued many interests, including travel, fishing, local rock/alt county music, carving, sports (especially, betting), cards and games. Most importantly, however, he was a genuine person with real interest in people. His unusual sense of humour, love of nature, good times and good food made him a fine friend and companion. He will be remembered by his many friends as the big guy with a bigger heart.

Dustin's determination, sense of humour, free spirit, positive disposition and high-quality contributions to insect science, despite the setbacks of his complex medical situation, was a particular inspiration to all who knew him. Dustin shall be missed by those in the Edmonton entomological community who had the pleasure and good fortune of working with him.

References

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John Spence, Professor Emeritus, University of Alberta, Edmonton

David Langor, Research Scientist, Northern Forestry Centre, Canadian Forest Service, Edmonton