

Mosquito Control District: Male chauvinists and mosquitoes got one-upped in quiz on human-insect similarities

By **JEFFREY C. STIVERS**, special to the Daily News
September 25, 2004

Our mosquito control contest in July asked readers to describe the characteristics shared by male mosquitoes and male humans and female mosquitoes and female humans. The winner -- whose coronation was unfortunately delayed by three hurricanes -- was to be the King of the Male Chauvinist Pigs. That apparently is not going to happen.

Here was the question: What are the main gender-based characteristics of both humans and mosquitoes that are the same?

Here was the Official MCP answer: Males, human and mosquito, are laid back and are interested in only two things, one of which is food and the other cannot be mentioned in a family newspaper. Females, on the other hand, are the bloodsuckers in both groups.

Then one of our readers, Rebecca L., came on the scene. She not only provided the expected answers, but threw in a few of her own with a different perspective.

As a result, the King is dead; long live Rebecca L., the Queen of the Female Chauvinist Sows! Prizes include a Collier Mosquito Control District ball cap she can consider her crown. Rebecca will also receive some royal prizes from our treasury of pencils, rubber band airplanes, stress reliever sponge airplanes, rulers, bookmarks, old fashioned squeeze change purses, erasers, balloons, zipper pulls and a keyboard duster/pen.

In addition to the correct answers, some of Rebecca's other observations regarding the "similarities" of humans and mosquitoes follow. Neither the Collier Mosquito Control District nor the Naples Daily News claim responsibility for her comments. But we do admit to laughing at them:

-- Female mosquitoes search diligently for water that will be suitable for her offspring just as human females will only raise their kids in the best environment. Like the most expensive neighborhood!

-- The mosquito's hum results from the high frequency of its wing beats; the female's slightly lower frequency may serve as a means of sex recognition. Just like most women are quiet while the males are overly loud and obnoxious!

-- Male mosquitoes only live a short time after mating, usually only six days, while females can survive from two to five months. Seems that women live longer than men in our species as well.

-- Male mosquitoes assemble in certain areas appropriate to the species, usually clearings in the forest, where they take flight and form swarms, in hopes of attracting a female. Sounds like a bunch of guys meeting at someone's house and then heading off to a club to see if they can pick up a woman.

-- After a male mosquito finds a female he mates with her in flight and then leaves while the female goes off to find a suitable place to lay her eggs. Sounds like a one-night stand to me -- and then ditching his responsibility to the kid he just left fatherless! -- And finally, the males are only good for one thing....mating! Seems like there's a lot in common here, eh?

-- Rebecca L.

On a more serious note, the summer rains have been causing flooding of low lying areas. Those flooded areas may soon begin producing mosquitoes to plague residents. And some of those mosquitoes may be carrying the West Nile virus.

It is time for residents to be concerned about the possibility of West Nile virus, once again, rearing its head in Naples. This is especially serious since school has started and students are standing outside, exposed to mosquitoes while waiting on the bus.

Remember and practice the "5 Ds":

Dusk and Dawn - avoid being outdoors during these times of day.

Dress - wear long pants and long sleeve shirts in a light color, shoes and socks when outdoors.

DEET - use a repellent containing DEET in accordance with the label on the product to protect uncovered skin.

Drain - empty containers and other objects such as bird baths, rain gutters, flower pots, and anything else that can hold water for more than two days.

School children should be appropriately dressed to reduce mosquito bites at the bus stop. If long pants and shirts are too hot or "un-cool" to wear in school, send shorts and T-shirts with the students so they can change at school or have them wear a windbreaker and warmup pants at the bus stop.