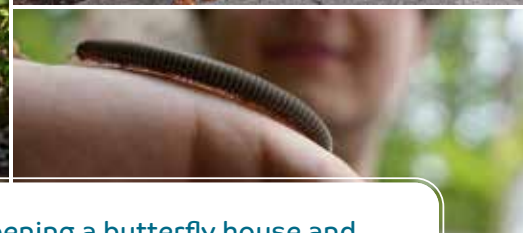


The Buzz Connections

By Jen Marangelo, Executive Director



WINTER 2025

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Our Mission

The Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium inspires an appreciation and understanding of insects and their relatives.

From the very beginning, my goal of opening a butterfly house and insectarium stemmed from a desire to inspire an appreciation for the world of arthropods...strengthening our human connection to the "Little Things That Run the World." Because without the invaluable services insects and arthropods provide, life as we know it would simply not exist.

That beginning was more than 20 years ago. We just celebrated the second anniversary of the opening of our new facility and I've never needed to spend more than a few minutes inside to see that we're achieving that goal each and every day. Through our exhibits, our live animals, and our amazing staff and volunteers, we're connecting visitors of all ages to an amazing and endless world of wonder.

And while highlighting our connections to the insect world is paramount to our mission, there are equally important connections developing as we reach toward our educational goals and objectives every day. They are the community connections we've made with supporters, partners, members, visitors, and friends like you.

It's the families that visit a few times a month. The older couple that visits each week for a dose of peace and inspiration. The young couples that have become engaged in the Butterfly House. The dedicated followers of our Bugs and Brews lecture series. The donors, businesses, and foundations who have generously and enthusiastically made what we do possible.

And our remarkable staff and volunteers who share so much of themselves in making the unique experience we provide so special.

In these, and many other ways, our buggy family has grown, and continues to grow, every day.

The fact that you are getting this newsletter means that you are part of this family. You are part of the community support and recognition of the unique destination we've created together. A destination that's slowly becoming a Missoula institution.

In the year ahead, we'll continue to strive to bring a sense of discovery and awe into all that we do... going back to that initial goal of strengthening the human connection to an important, incredible, and sometimes bizarre, world.

On behalf of all of us at the Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium, thank you for being part of this incredible journey. **Best wishes for a wonderful holiday season!** 🐛

Visit us!

1075 South Ave. W., Suite 2
 Missoula, MT 59801
missoulabutterflyhouse.org/visit-us



Scan the QR code to learn more!

Hours

Tuesday-Saturday: 10AM-5PM
 Sunday: Noon to 4PM
 Monday: CLOSED

The Third Time's a Charm



When we moved the massive, 700-pound, custom-built terrarium for our leafcutter ant exhibit into place, we thought the hardest part was over. As it turned out, this was just the beginning of a year-long journey for this extraordinary exhibit.

ROUND 1: Due to delays in the construction of the exhibit terrarium, it was not until late May of 2024 that our ant consultant (Ryan) informed us that he'd be showing up in 2 weeks with two leafcutter ant colonies: the species *Atta cephalotes* to be on exhibit and *Acromyrmex octospinosus* as a backup colony in our lab. Unfortunately, when acquiring our exhibit colony, Ryan discovered the queen had just died. Deciding to put them on display anyway, we'd have 4 to 5 months of activity until the colony significantly declined.

ROUND 2: By late 2024 it was time to install our backup colony. However, this colony was very different from the *Atta* colony the exhibit was designed around. Based on their biology, the *Acromyrmex* colony would never grow very large, meaning that we'd see much less activity. Rather than utilize the multi-chambered design on exhibit, these ants established one main fungal chamber as their home. And

while our staff loved this smaller, less-active species of ant, they simply did not provide the visual experience we were hoping for.

ROUND 3: Knowing we ultimately wanted an active colony of *Atta cephalotes* for our exhibit, in July 2025 Ryan contacted us with the exciting news that he had a new colony ready for us. After transporting our *Acromyrmex* colony to a smaller exhibit better suited for their size and lifestyle, we welcomed our new *Atta* colony...and if you've visited within the last few months, the difference is amazing.

Just as we envisioned from the beginning, this popular exhibit now gets lots of "ooh's" and "ahh's" as leafcutter ants traverse the rope bridge connecting their home to the source of leaves they continually cut, carry home, and feed the fungus that serves as food for the entire colony.

Thank you, Ryan! And thank you to our supporters, members, and visitors for your patience in getting this incredible exhibit just right. As the saying goes, the third time's a charm. 🐜

MBHI STAFF LIST

Stacy Carr-Poole, Operations Director
Scott Debnam, Live Collections Assistant
Shelby Fisher, Administrative Coordinator
Madeline Kleeman, Museum Interpreter and Naturalist
Kate Likvan, Gift Shop Manager
Glenn Marangelo, Development Director
Jen Marangelo, Executive Director

Misty Nelson, Marketing & Events Coordinator
Hallee Olsen, Museum Assistant
Nick Pineschi, Lead Animal Keeper
Ashley Sinclair, Visitor Relations Coordinator
Carolyn Taber, Education Coordinator
Rob Taylor, Lead Horticulturalist
Savannah Thompson, Museum Assistant



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African Moon Moth

WHAT'S NEW



Buttonquail



Zebra Finch

As anyone who has ever had a pet — or even a houseplant — can attest, taking care of other living things can be a big responsibility. Our living collections staff work hard to make sure that all the animals (and plants) in our care thrive — but we also want to make sure those organisms contribute to an interesting and meaningful experience for museum visitors, which presents a completely different kind of challenge. Fortunately, there are some species with enough charisma to make that part of the job a lot easier.

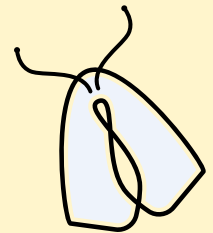
The African Moon Moth (*Argema mimosae*) is a stunning new addition to our flight crew. From their large silvery cocoons to the vibrant green color and dramatic tails on their wings, these nocturnal silk moths are breathtaking. The adult moths do not have functioning mouthparts and thus can neither eat nor drink; surviving solely on fat reserves, their lifespan as adults is typically about one week. If you're lucky enough to catch a glimpse of one, though, we can almost guarantee you'll be smitten.

“...we recently welcomed zebra finches and orange-cheeked waxbills to combat pests higher up in the conservatory.”

Speaking of smitten, we know how much everyone adores our buttonquail. But maybe you didn't know that these ground-dwelling birds do more than just entertain our visitors — they are also exceptionally good at controlling ants and other unwanted pests. Given the success of our ground-level pest control squad, we decided to expand our avian team: we recently welcomed zebra finches and orange-cheeked waxbills to combat pests higher up in the conservatory. The chirps and songs of these busy little birds will round out the sensory experience in the Butterfly House, creating a truly immersive tropical escape right here in western Montana. 🐛



MBHI BUSINESS PARTNERS:



WHERE CURIOSITY MEETS COMMUNITY

We are immensely grateful for the enthusiasm and support we get from our individual visitors, members, and donors. Now we have a way for businesses to share the love, too! With our new Business Partners Program, your organization can sponsor our hands-on learning and museum experiences, while giving your team exclusive perks and unique opportunities for brand recognition inside the Butterfly House and Insectarium. With multiple sponsorship levels to choose from, businesses large and small can be a part of something special! **Contact us today to learn more.** 🐛

NEW STAFF



Nick Pineschi



Misty Nelson

Our team welcomed two new members this summer – we are so happy to have **Nick Pineschi** as our new **Lead Animal Keeper** and **Misty Nelson** as our new **Marketing and Events Coordinator!**

Nick has taken on the care of our over 75 species of arthropods, including the animals we have on exhibit in the Insectarium and the animals that we care for in the lab. Nick came to us from Thanksgiving Point's Butterfly Biosphere in Utah with a background in animal husbandry and an interest in running an animal care lab.

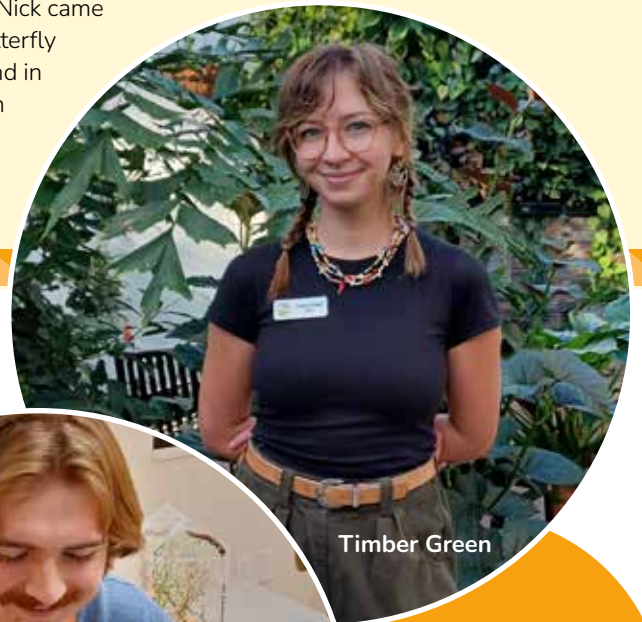
Misty has taken on the marketing of the organization and all of our great programs, while also organizing our special events, such as Bug Appétit and Bugs and Brews. A Missoula native and valued volunteer, Misty comes to us with a strong conservation background and a passion for our mission. 🐛

Interns

With education at the forefront in all we do, we are particularly excited about our growing internship program. Internships provide essential hands-on experience for students and emerging professionals. Our interns engage with guests, assist with the care of our animals, and gain an understanding of the workings of our organization.

This fall, we have two wonderful interns: **Timber Green** and **Lucas Hardoerfer!** Both Timber and Lucas have brought so much passion to their work and we hope their experience with us will set them up for success.

When asked about her experience at MBHI, Timber said, "I've come to realize that people who are scared or disgusted by insects know close to nothing about them. Helping a few or even just one person learn something new while I'm in the Insectarium, I know I'm making a difference in how they see the world around them." 🐛



Timber Green



Lucas Hardoerfer

"...I know I'm making a difference in how they see the world around them."

Year-End Giving

Over the past 12 months we've welcomed over 67,000 visitors – families, kids, grandparents, and kids at heart – and engaged more than 6,500 students in our field trips. We've expanded the variety of ways you can experience the Butterfly House with meditation and yoga sessions, photography classes, insect pinning classes, art classes, and more. And we've continued to add new species (of arthropods, birds, and plants) to our exhibits so you always have more to learn and explore.

While admission income, program fees, and memberships are important parts of our annual budget, they only cover a portion of what it takes to provide our unique education experiences for our schools, our community, and visitors to Missoula. The holiday season is a time of year when many of us choose to make year-end gifts to support the organizations and causes that add so much to our lives. We certainly hope the Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium will be in your year-end giving considerations.

HERE ARE A FEW WAYS YOU CAN MAKE A DONATION:

Traditional Donations – It's easy to make a tax-deductible year-end donation. Just go to weblink.donorperfect.com/MBHIdonate or mail a check to us at 1075 South Ave. W., Suite 2, Missoula, MT 59801.



Flight Crew Monthly Donations – Would you rather have your support go to something specific? Support the acquisition of our butterflies! The Flight Crew is a monthly giving club focused specifically on keeping the Butterfly House full of insect beauty. As a Flight Crew donor, we'll send you a Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium "Flight Crew" stainless steel thermal tumbler as a small token of our appreciation. Just scan this QR code or go to weblink.donorperfect.com/FlightCrew.



Appreciated Stock – Sitting on some appreciated stock? A stock donation is a great way to support our work and avoid paying capital gains tax. For more information about this giving option, give Glenn a call at **406-317-1211** or email glenn@missoulabutterflyhouse.org.

IRA Charitable Rollover – This is a tax-free way for IRA owners to donate to charity. If you're 70.5 years old or older, have an IRA, and don't need the income from your required minimum distribution, you can donate all or part of those funds directly from your IRA to a charity and avoid paying taxes on what would normally count as taxable income. For more information, please speak with your tax adviser or financial professional.

Thank you for your consideration! 🐛



Bugzoola Gift Shop

Relax. There's still plenty of time to find a unique gift for that someone buggy on your holiday shopping list. Done with your shopping? Then treat yourself to something that expresses your love for the "little things" we share our planet with. Conveniently nestled next to the entrance of our facility, our Bugzoola gift shop just might have exactly what you're looking for. With an assortment of insect-themed jewelry, educational toys, hats, t-shirts, books, art, Butterfly House logo items, and perfect stocking stuffers for insect enthusiasts of any age, we've got a little something for everyone.

Shop local! Check out Bugzoola for some truly unique gifts, while supporting our facility and education efforts at the same time. 🐛

Bugzoola is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 AM to 5:15 PM and Sunday from 12:00 PM to 4:15 PM. Closed on Monday.





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& INSECTARIUM

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EXPLORING the little things that run the world.

Volunteer Spotlight

In August, we celebrated our amazing volunteers at our Annual Volunteer Picnic. We recognized 26 volunteers who gave more than 100 hours of service. We also recognized a Volunteer of the Year. For 2025, our Volunteer of the Year was Qin Yu!

When asked why she loves to volunteer, Qin said "There are many things I love about volunteering at MBHI. Among them, the welcoming environment to all, very knowledgeable, kind and passionate staff, the curiosity from visitors and co-volunteers (kids and adults alike), and the endless opportunities of learning new things about the arthropod world. It's a happy place to be!"

Whether she is on the floor or taking care of our buggy friends, we love having Qin as part of our team! 🐛

"...It's a happy place to be!"

- Qin Yu



Missoula Butterfly House & Insectarium Board of Directors

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Retired Teacher

Kathryn Herman, *Vice President*
Teacher, Missoula Community School

Lucca Scariano, *Treasurer*
Financial Advisor, Edward Jones

Michael Carter, *Secretary*
Retired Wildlife Biologist / Fundraiser

Michael Kuntz
Senior Structural Engineer, HDR

Nickolette Lannan
Social Media & Development
Manager, Blue Mountain Clinic

Jen Marangelo
Executive Director, Missoula Butterfly
House and Insectarium

Jana McGrath
Jana Louise Bookkeeping, LLC



If you're interested in volunteering, please visit our website at missoulabutterflyhouse.org/get-involved/volunteer/.

