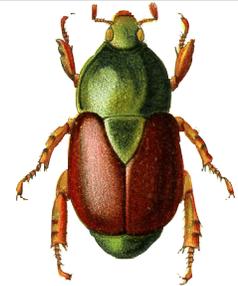


# SCARABS



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Occasional Issue Number 46

Print ISSN 1937-8343 Online ISSN 1937-8351

December, 2009

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## The Most Beautiful Scarab

by the Readers

### Black is Beautiful, Baby!

by Brett C. Ratcliffe

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My area of specialty is the subfamily Dynastinae. Most dynastines are black. Since I like dynastines very much, it follows that I also like black very much, and this is why I choose a black dynastine for my entry in the Most Beautiful Scarab contest. I mean, after all, there are so many wonderful shades of black: dark black, light black, black black, shining black, dull black. Dynastines are not ones to flaunt gaudy colors like their foppish cousins, the cetoniines! Such ostentatious frippery in an otherwise advanced group!

John Rock, an abolitionist who lived in the mid-1800s, was the first to coin the phrase “Black is Beautiful” during an anti-slavery speech in Faneuil Hall in Boston in 1858. He did not study dynastines, for which he can

be forgiven given the state of our science in those days. But he was one of the first black men to earn a medical degree, and he was the first black person to be admitted to the bar of the U. S. Supreme Court. “Black is Beautiful” also became a cultural movement that began in the United States in the 1960s by African Americans, and it later spread to much of the black world. But I digress. Black has a distinguished history dating back to before the Big Bang event . . . when it was very black everywhere.

*Truth is beauty.*

*Black is.*

*Therefore, black is beautiful.*

The idea that blackness in scarabs is ugly amounts to taxonomic chauvinism that may have resulted from the societal associations with the word black; doom, gloom, evil, sinister, wicked, grim, black death, black sheep. Those are difficult associations to overcome . . . especially by cetoniine workers who are constantly exposed to bright and gaudy colors.

Figure 1 shows a black dynastine as seen in low light. Note how detail



Figure 1: A black dynastine.

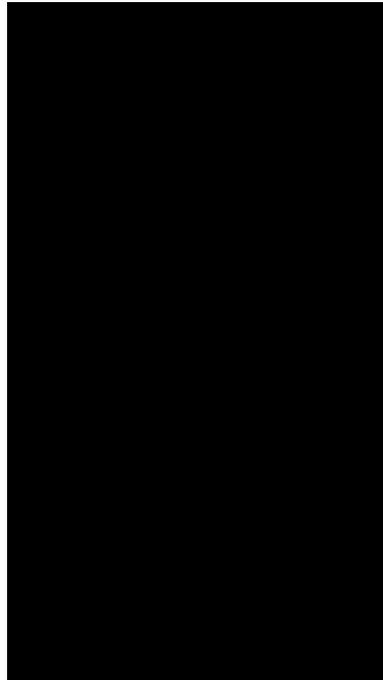


Figure 2: A black dynastine at night.

tends to disappear in the absence of light.

Figure 2 shows the same beetle at night. The black color is, no doubt, adaptive in that you cannot see the damn things at night if you are a predator or a beetle collector.

Pretty smart, those black dynastines. And very beautiful as well.



A veritable salad swarming with beautiful German scarabs.

### A Different Take on Beautiful

by Mary Liz Jameson

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OK... so, if we define beauty as: "The quality that gives pleasure to the mind or senses", then all of us can agree that ALL scarabs are beautiful! The brilliantly colored leaf chafers, the drab nocturnal rhino beetles, the filth-covered aphodiines (no progression in levels of beauty inferred in this list, of course). But, real beauty would also inspire or stimulate other pleasure centers, not just those concerned with aesthetics. Thus, my selected favorite scarab

is the seasonal “Maikaefer” of German tradition--the type that you find in the confection store! Chocolate Maikaefer are given as gifts, and they symbolize luck as well as rebirth and spring. What better way to begin your new scarab collecting season than with a few chocolate Maikaefer! Now, that’s beautiful (especially if it is dark chocolate)! Lang Phasenscarabauskaefer!



Beautiful AND anatomically accurate.



*Editors' Note: We were confounded, perplexed, flummoxed, bamboozled and vexed about how to reward Mary Liz for her unusual submission. Certainly, a portrait of Jennifer would not do! Instead, we elected to send her an iron-on transfer of the opulent, somewhat pompous, yet certainly rakish babe magnet Bill Warner, so Mary Liz can do with it as she pleases (we did not supply the dartboard).*

*Around here, our employees iron them onto T-shirts (as modeled here by Jennifer) since they don't get to see their favorite scarabaeologist as much as they used to.*

**Beautiful Scarabs in the Collection  
of the Natural History Museum,  
London**

by Conrad P.D.T. Gillett

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Although beauty is obviously a very subjective quality, it is difficult to disagree with the fact that the student of the superfamily Scarabaeoidea is more generously provisioned with attractive and wonderful species than those of most other groups of Coleoptera. I will not argue that a golden *Chrysina*, a tiger-striped *Gymnetis*, a spotted *Megalorrhina*, a pink *Trypocopris* or even a metallic *Phalacrognathus* are anything but magnificent creatures.



**Photograph 1:** *Coprophanaeus (Megaphanaeus) lancifer* (Linnaeus) male with many parasitic ticks on the anterior pronotal cavity. Widely distributed in Amazonia.

Still, I think some of the dung beetle tribe Phanaeini are also amongst the most beautiful scarabs; after all, they are shiny and they have horns!

The following are photographs of a few of the spectacular species in this group. All specimens are housed in the Natural History Museum collections, South Kensington, London (BMNH).

**Acknowledgements**

The author is indebted to Harry Taylor of the Natural History Museum Photographic Unit for Photographs 1-10, and to James Kitson (University of East Anglia) for Photographs 11 and 12.



**Photograph 2:** *Phanaeus (Notiophanaeus) dejeani* Harold male. Higher elevation Atlantic forest in SE Brazil.



Photograph 3: *Oxysternon* (*Mioxysternon*) *pteroderum* Nevinson minor male. Atlantic forest of SE Brazil. This is the well-known specimen labeled 'Buenos Aires'.



Photograph 5: *Sulcophanaeus imperator* (Chevrolat) male. Northern Argentina, southern Bolivia and Paraguay.



Photograph 4: *Oxysternon festivum* (Linnaeus) male. Eastern Amazonia.



Photograph 6: *Diabroctis cadmus* (Harold) male. Venezuela and Bolivia.



Photograph 7: *Coprophanaeus horus* (Waterhouse) HOLOTYPE male held in the BMNH, dorsal and oblique views. Cerrado of Brazil, Paraguay and northern Argentina.



Photograph 8: *Phanaeus excelsus* Bates HOLOTYPE male held in the BMNH, dorsal and oblique views. Blue specimen from Nicaragua.



Photograph 9: *Phanaeus kirbyi* Vigors HOLOTYPE male held in the BMNH, dorsal and oblique views. Cerrado of Brazil, Paraguay and Bolivia.



Photograph 10: *Phanaeus (Notiophanaeus) pyrois* Bates HOLOTYPE male held in the BMNH, dorsal and oblique views. Central America.



Photographs 11 and 12: *Sulcophanaeus rhadamanthus* (Harold) male held in the BMNH, oblique and dorsal view. An extremely rare species restricted to the Atlantic forest of southeastern Brazil.



## A Beautiful Scarab Backpack

by Gino Nearn, Ph.D. Candidate

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*Editors' Note: This looks like *Phanaeus haroldi* to us. Some of you may recognize Gino as the webmaster for the Coleopterists Society, where he does a fabulous job of posting Scarabs.*

*Editors' Note: Again, we we so pleased with the contributions that we decided to send everyone this second portrait of Jennifer.*

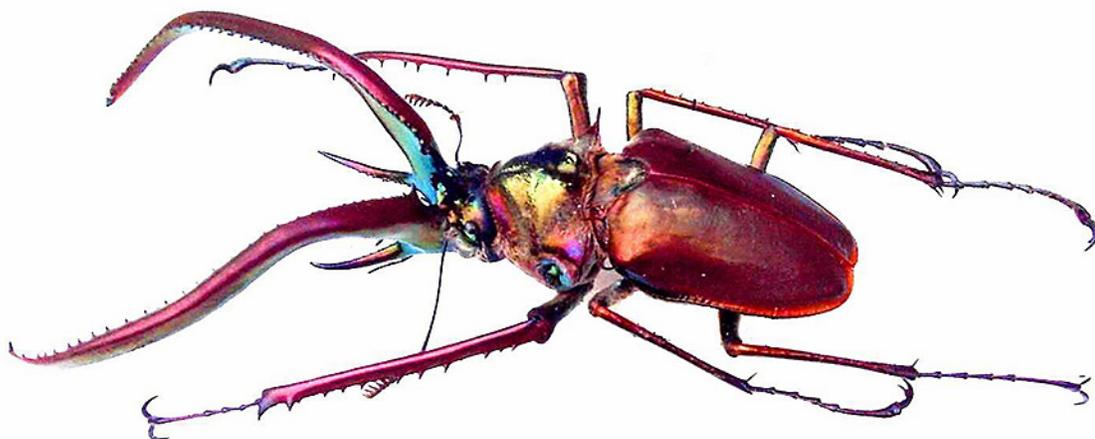
*Sorry ladies - Bill absolutely refused to pose in this dress!*



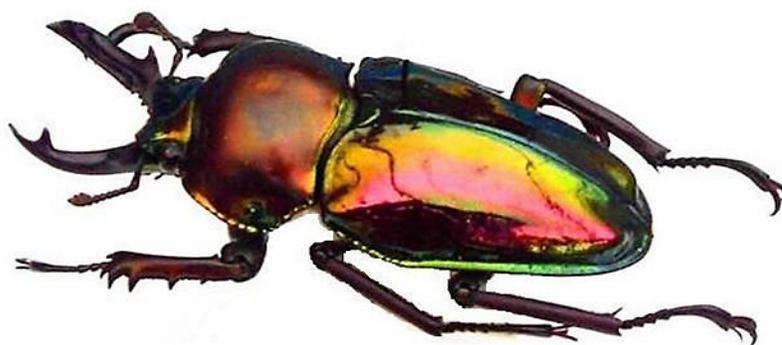
## Three Beautiful Scarabs

by Olivier Décobert

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Photograph 1: *Chiasognathus granti* from Chili.



Photograph 2: *Phalacrognathus mülleri* from Australia.

Photograph 3: *Diabroctis mimas* from Brazil.



## There is Beauty in Numbers

by Jesús Orozco

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I took this picture last year while collecting in Belize. This proves there is beauty on numbers: six *Inca clathrata* in a single trap. The caption to this photograph is "My Bait Is Better Than Your Bait."

*Editors' Note: The clever and resourceful Jesús sent the unsuspecting Jennifer a photograph of himself. She was totally taken with this thoughtful gesture (not to mention his "incredible Latin eyes and all-around good looks," as she put it), and sent Jesús two additional prints of herself.*



*Gymnetosoma stellata*

by Alan D. Mudge

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The most beautiful scarab? No contest - *Gymnetosoma stellata* (Latreille, 1833) found from México south to Colombia and Venezuela. The bold patterns are thought to disrupt the body's outline, blending it into its natural background (like stripes on a tiger) and concealing it from potential predators - an effect known as somatolysis (= "figure dissolution"). It may work well in nature, but in a unit tray, it makes for one beautiful scarab!

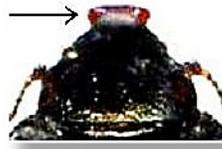


# Beautiful Little *Hoplia* and *Anisoplia* of Europa

by Olivier Décobert

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The genera *Hoplia* (Illiger) and *Anisoplia* (Fischer) are represented by diminutive scarabs which live in meadows. They feed on flowers and grasses, often in groups, between May and August. Larvae feed on roots of many different plants. The genus *Anisoplia* is easy to recognize with its head prolonged by a clypeus which looks like a snout. This is a quick method to differentiate *Anisoplia* and *Hoplia*.



“Snout” characteristic of *Anisoplia*.

These insects are distributed in almost all the regions of the world, except Australia. In Europa, there are about 40 species in the genus *Hoplia* and 50 for *Anisoplia*.

I found some of these scarabs in France and exchanged others with a Spanish entomologist:

*Hoplia coerulea* (Drury) can be encountered in vegetation bordering rivers and streams, in the South of my country. Its size is between 8 and 10 mm. The male (Photo 1) displays a spectacular iridescent blue color (structural color due to multi-layers structure of the scales covering the cuticle). The female, generally grey, is seldom seen, but her presence can be detected by the gathering of many blue males.

*Hoplia argentea* (Poda) measures 9 to 11 mm (Photo 2). This species is covered by green, yellow, or sometimes blue-grey scales. So the colour is variable but not iridescent like *Hoplia coerulea*.



Photo 1: *Hoplia coerulea* (Drury)

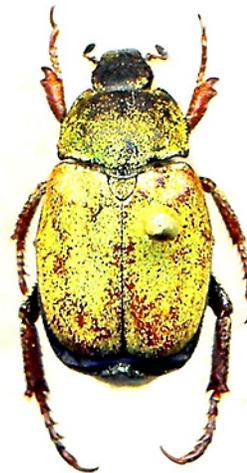


Photo 2: *Hoplia argentea* (Poda)

*Hoplia philanthus* (Füessly) (= *farinosa* L.) has very few or sometimes no scales. So for that species (Photo 3), one can see the aspect of the cuticle which is dark brown or black. It is about 9 mm long.

*Hoplia bilineata* (Fabricius) is a Spanish species (Photo 4) whose size is between 10 and 13 mm. There are again many scales which can be yellow or green. The two longitudinal bands on the pronotum are not covered with scales.



Photo 3: *Hoplia philanthus* (Füessly)



Photo 4: *Hoplia bilineata* (Fabricius)

In the genus *Anisoplia*, there are many closely related scarabs that are difficult to differentiate. Moreover, in every species, there is a great variability, illustrated by the Spanish *Anisoplia baetica* (Erichson) in Photo 5. There is a curious figure on elytra of this specimen but this species (10 to 13 mm) can also have the same general aspect than *Anisoplia villosa* (Goeze) in Photo 6 or *Anisoplia remota* (Reitter) in Photo 7.



Photo 5: *Anisoplia baetica* (Erichson)



Photo 6: *Anisoplia villosa* (Goeze)



Photo 7: *Anisoplia remota* (Reitter)

These two last species are found in France. *A. villosa* (7-12 mm) is more widely distributed in my country and easy to recognize because it is very hairy, contrary to *A. remota* (10-13 mm) which is a Southern species.

I collected a larva (Photo 8) of *Anisoplia remota* (Reitter) in April, 2009 and obtained the adult from the pupa (Photo 9) in June. The larva was under a rock, eating roots. It was on the Southern french coast, near the village of Vendres.



Photo 8: Larva of *Anisoplia remota* (Reitter)

Photo 9: Pupa and cast skin of *Anisoplia remota* (Reitter)



Good habitats for *Hoplia* and *Anisoplia* are in the mountains (the Pyrénées are shown here), in July. These scarabs frequent the grasses and plants in these montane meadows, as seen on the left of the photograph.

## In Past Years - XXIX - 1985

by Henry F. Howden

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In the Ottawa spring of 1985 we were visited by Clarke Scholtz from Pretoria, South Africa. He and I were working on several projects, but also had time to do some field work. So, in early May, Anne and I introduced him to the eastern U.S. by driving to Texas. We left while the nights in Ottawa were still near freezing.

By the third night we had reached Fort Payne, Alabama, where it was humid and warm. We all collected at the lights near the motel where we stayed and gave the catch to Clarke since we had collected near there during our four years at Knoxville, Tennessee.

The next day was warm (88 °F.) and on our way to Alexandria, Louisiana, we heard an odd, continuous, high pitched noise. At first I thought the noise was caused by the car, then I remembered hearing the same sound years ago in Maryland: 17- or 13-year cicadas! We stopped long enough to introduce Clarke to this North American phenomenon and to collect a few specimens before driving on.

We arrived at Nacogdoches, Texas, in the rain. After finding a motel, we visited with Bill Gibson; the talk that evening was mostly about collecting and beetles. We left early the next morning in the rain. As

we approached Houston we had to stop several times; the rain was so heavy that we couldn't see. Finally, south of Houston, the rain stopped and we drove on to Kingsville and found a new, inexpensive motel with a nearby field of mesquite and cactus which offered different collecting. About five minutes after we rented our rooms, Clarke came literally jumping out of his room; it was full of fleas! The motel owner gave Clarke a new room, some insecticide for any hitch-hiking fleas and mentioned that they did allow pets in the motel.

Once we determined that our rooms were free of pests, we drove to the nearby Texas A & I (Arts and Industries) University to meet with their entomologist, James Gillaspay. He showed us their collection of beetles, small but containing many rare local species including *Bradycinetulus rex* Cartwright. This species had been taken in small numbers at an illuminated rest stop on the highway between Kingsville and Brownsville.

James also gave us directions to the University Field Station, 10 km east of Riviera, an old abandoned army air station with several usable buildings. Much of the station's sandy grounds were covered with coastal scrub and we had good general collecting; Clarke collected a series of *Trox* and I added about



**Photo 1: Santa Anna Game Refuge; we didn't see any game, but we were prey to lots of mosquitoes!**



**Photo 2: Welder Wildlife Refuge; lodging for visitors; even with mowed lawn the occasional rattlesnake was found near the building.**

three species of tiger beetles to my “stamp collection” of that group - they are always fun to catch! That night was warm and humid and we expected our light would attract quantities of beetles. Quantities, yes, but not uncommon beetles; *Digitonthophagus gazella* in some numbers, two or three species of *Phyllophaga*, *Strategus julianus* and a few other non-scarabs. Not an exciting evening.

The next morning we drove south to Brownsville and out to the coast at Boca Chica where we found three species of tiger beetles, but not much else. The Palm Jungle at Brownsville was closed to visitors, and the entire area was dry and mostly fenced (visitors not welcome). Clarke, in the last few days, learned that open toed sandals and bare feet were not always the best foot-wear in grass mixed with *Opuntia* cactus.

After a night in Brownsville, we briefly went to the Santa Anna Game Refuge (Photo 1). There we found a few *Phyllophaga* at the Headquarters building and lots of mosquitoes in the park.

From there we drove with a few short stops to Rio Grande City and then to the Welder Wildlife Refuge near Sinton (Photo 2). Welder is a great place, if they approve of your research project, housing you and letting you use their laboratory facilities. The Refuge extends along the south side of the Aransas River (Photo 3), In 1977 Vince Nealis published a study of the Welder

dung beetles in the *Canadian Journal of Zoology*.

Our project was to try to replicate Nealis's study in a short time. We knew approximately where he had set his traps and we tried to set our traps in similar areas. To avoid a long and probably boring discussion, one can check the *Coleopterists Bulletin*, 1986, #40(4), pp. 313-316 for the results of our study. We did turn up two species that Nealis had not recorded, both new dominants: one the imported *Digitonthophagus gazella* (Fab.), the other *O. alluvius* Howden & Cartwright. Nealis recorded three species that we didn't collect. Our collecting included not only dung traps, but flight interception trap (FIT) and light traps and many of the species that came to dung were also present in either the FIT's or at the lights. One species, *Phanaeus difformis* LeC., was so common at our dung trap set in a large, open, sandy area (Photo 4) that we stopped collecting them after one day.

Another rather recent, unwanted arrival at Welder was the Argentine Fire Ant. Several of our dung traps had to be moved when these pests found them. It was even worse when the ants found us before we noticed them! A single sting would produce a red dot on me and when stung by a number of them, it looked like I was wearing red socks. I would run out of expletives if I said more about these pests.



**Photo 3: Welder's "hackberry mot" on the south side of the Aransas River; *Onthophagus alluvius* H. & C. was the most common dung beetle in this habitat.**



**Photo 4: The open habitat away from the Aransas river at Welder; *Phanaeus difformis* LeC. was common in the sandy, grassland areas.**



Photo 5: A rest stop near Uvalde, Texas; Clarke Scholtz excavating trogids that had come to the building's lights; because the area was watered there were many beetles.



Photo 6: A few of the *Canthon imitator* Brown on the section of the King Ranch near Uvalde, Texas.

While at Welder we made day trips to nearby localities; one was a freshly cut patch of scrub 5 km west of Alice. We collected some great cerambycids during the day, and that evening, at our lights, collected several species of bolboceratines, aphodiines, numerous *Ochodaeus*, *Diplotaxis*, *Phyllophaga* and others.

After a week at Welder, we moved northwest to Uvalde, where we took rooms on the ground floor of a modern, two story motel. We spent several days collecting at two localities near Uvalde. One was on a section of the King Ranch and the other was at a rest stop with a lighted building about 65 km west of Uvalde on route 83. There was not much at light, but digging around the edge of the building (Photo 5) yielded a series of bolboceratines, trogids, and other beetles attracted to the building lights. The area was regularly watered, which probably accounted for the good collecting. Collecting at the King Ranch did not yield anything not collected elsewhere, but the number of *Canthon imitator* Brown was impressive (Photo 6); the adults were everywhere and seemed to follow one around hoping that some feces might appear.

Back at the motel, Clarke (and Anne and I) learned a little about the "Wild West". We had noted that most pick-up trucks in Texas had a gun rack in the back of the cab, usually with guns. On the morning that we were due to leave, people were running around and there were police and an ambulance in

the parking lot. A person on the second floor had been shot in the right thigh as he came out of his room. It turned out that he was a local banker and was in the room with the wife of a local postman. The postman had parked in the lot below, used a gun from his gun rack, and shot the banker, complaining only that his aim was slightly off to the right! Local opinion was slightly in favor of the postman, but we never learned how the case was settled.

From Uvalde we drove back to Nacogdoches where we spent several days collecting with Bill Gibson. From there we wandered back across the Smoky Mountains (Photo 7) to North Carolina, collecting along the way. I intended to show Clarke my old collecting grounds near Southern Pines, North Carolina; in the sand hills there I had collected numerous geotrupines while doing my thesis. Unfortunately, as so often happens, progress had caught up with me and my favorite area was now occupied by houses and a golf course!

I also ran into a bit of unexpected bureaucracy. The only bit of undeveloped land nearby was a research station run by my old alma mater, North Carolina State University in Raleigh. I went to the main building and asked if we could collect in their sand hills for a few hours and was told that I was not authorized to do so. My pleas did no good; Clarke was not impressed and my opinion of some types

of regulations remained rather negative. Four days later we were back in Ottawa; having traveled 7,126 miles and introduced Clarke to a large part of the eastern U.S., plus motel fleas and a wounded banker!



**Photo 7: On the way back to Ottawa we took the scenic route through the Smoky Mountains.**

## Bug People III

from the Secret Files of Henry Howden

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This photo was taken after a joint meeting of the Entomological Society of America and the Canadian Entomological Society. Members of the Coleopterists Society were invited to Carlton University, where this photo was taken. Can you identify these entomologists? The answer is at the bottom of this page.



**Left:** Buprestid worker who spent time in Ecuador and Costa Rica, now retired from Standard Fruit.  
**Back of head:** This entomologist was mentioned in Bug People II. Do you remember him?  
**In turtleneck:** Chrysomelid worker, now Collections Manager at the U.S. National Museum.  
**In dark sweater:** “Aphodiotera” worker, now a rancher in North Dakota.  
**White shirt with beard:** Slime beetle expert, went from Cornell University to the British Museum to Arizona.  
**Smiling with beard:** Chrysomelid worker, at the Canadian National Collection in Ottawa.  
**Side of face holding drink:** Chrysomelid worker, now with Dodson Brothers Exterminating.  
**White shirt with glasses:** Beetle artist, now at Oregon State University, Corvallis.  
**Right:** Tenebrionid worker, computer programmer with the State of California.

Answers: Gary Manley, John Cooper, David Furch, Robert Gordon, Quentin Wheeler, Laurent Lesage, Eric Smith, David Maddison, Rolf Aalbu.