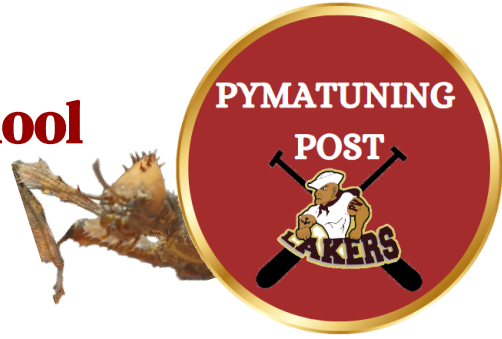


# Pymatuning Valley High School

## Pymatuning Post

November 20th, 2023



## *The Bugs* By: *Isabella Limestoll*

Gina Hill, a PV alumni and now OSU graduate, joined the Pymatuning Valley High School to educate some of the student body on her passion: Entomology. Hill does outreach where she brings her insects to schools, libraries, and festivals. Hill brought ten insects with her all of which were unique and fascinating.

When asked what inspired her to go into Entomology she replied, “I had a biology lab and we were doing behavioral trials with hissing cockroaches and Isopods. Everyone was holding the roaches like it wasn’t a big deal, it was a big deal... I walked up to the bin of roaches and just grabbed one and held it, it just sat in my hand. This was nothing like I thought a roach was like. It blew my mind and changed my whole perspective on insects. Later that day I declared my minor in Entomology.”

One of the many insects PV students experienced was the Dairy Cow Isopods. The most common Isopod is what is often called a

rolly polly; however, the Dairy Cow Isopods can not roll into a ball, their only defense mechanism is to run away. They are the fastest Isopod and are detritivores, which means they eat dead things.

Another really interesting arachnid learned about is the Salmon Pink Birdeater. Contrary to its name, the Birdeater does not eat birds; it's the other way around. The birdeater will grow to be around 12 inches by 12 inches, making it the fourth largest arachnid. Hill taught that tarantulas can shed their exoskeletons and get all new body parts, this includes new legs, eyes, teeth, and even lungs! As tarantulas grow they go through one to two molts (shedding of their exoskeleton) a year. When they reach adulthood they molt every one to three years. Female bird eaters can live up to 50 years and can even go years without any food.

Hill allowed some insects to be held by students. Some students had millipedes walking across their hands, stick-bugs marched up arms, hissing cockroaches vocalized their discontent while being held, and



Kendra Wallace and Mrs Hunt



Sirenity Bailey, Baleigh Dewalt, Riley Whitt, Gina Hill, and Nick Sapp

as well as a number of other hands-on experiences.

Finally the last animal Hill showed was the scorpion. She showed that scorpions can glow in the dark, or are biofluorescent. Interestingly enough, scientists still do not know why they glow! It's currently still being actively researched but it's thought to do something with their hair follicles. Hill also explained that scorpions cannot climb smooth surfaces and cannot jump, so she was able to bring the scorpion around with the lid off to show students.

In the end everyone learned so many interesting things thanks to Gina Hill and her outreach program. Helping her was Nick Sapp who is also a PV alumni and current student at YSU.



Left to Right: Isaac Varela, Savannah Daugherty, Lucian Lopez