

Friends of the Entomology Research Museum



Newsletter



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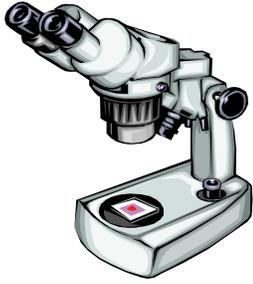
FERM Meeting!

Editorial transition and apology

No doubt it hasn't escaped peoples' attention that this newsletter is long overdue - that we had no Spring or Summer 2005 issue. Eagle-eyed regulars may also have noticed a slight shift in the names at the top of the page, as well. Without going into gruesome details, our long-standing editor, Rick Vetter, has recently experienced a change in his position here at UCR, necessitating—at least temporarily—that he would be unable to work on the Newsletter. We were not really prepared for this eventuality, and it's taken some time to figure out what, exactly, our "Plan B" would be. So, for this issue, it looks like I, Doug Yanega, will have to take over the primary Editorial duties, despite my glaring lack of familiarity with the proper use of Microsoft Publisher. If the learning curve proves to be manageable, we shouldn't have problems getting back on schedule, but it's hard to say. There will definitely be a Winter Newsletter to announce the next Annual Meeting, but the Fall issue this year is a little more iffy. We (mostly me) apologize for not picking up the pieces a little quicker in order to salvage the Spring Newsletter, and hopefully that won't happen again. But we do need submissions rather badly, so please send things in!

The FERM Newsletter is published quarterly and contains articles written by FERM members. If you would like to submit an article, please send it as a Word/Wordperfect file using one of the following two methods: (1) an attachment via email to the editor (see below) or (2) a hard copy version on disk. Submissions will be published in the order they are received in accordance with space availability and relevancy to the FERM general readership. If you have questions please contact the FERM Newsletter editor:

Doug Yanega (dyanega@ucr.edu)



NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM

by Doug Yanega, Senior Museum Scientist

This spring quarter involved a lot of quality field time (including an extremely productive trip to Thailand - which might be an upcoming Newsletter article, if Greg Ballmer can be persuaded) but - alas - very few FERM members actually attended the scheduled local FERM trips. We may or may not try again next year, but given the poor turnout, we may simply stick with an e-mail list, rather than trying to plan the trips several months in advance only to have no one show up. Folks missed some spectacular trips in May, especially - due to our record-shattering rainfall, the season was early for wildflowers, but late for insects, making for some exceptionally rich late spring collecting. All told, this has been an above average year for rare wasps and bees, and truly awesome for various *Rhaphiomidas* species (the giant Flower-loving Flies). If this coming winter's rains are anything like this season's, then next year promises to yield some of the most mind-boggling bug collecting in SoCal history, and I may just have to take a vacation simply to go cruising the area non-stop for a month or two.

We've had the good fortune to be able to keep Justin Betz working in the ERM point-mounting small wasps (partially using FERM funds, so thanks to our membership!), and he's been incredibly productive, mounting almost 20,000 specimens so far. Raj Saran and I tried but were unable to keep pace labeling them, and it may still be a while before we get caught up.

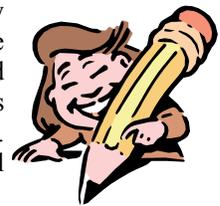
As a result of this (and the spring collecting), the Museum's regular database has grown abruptly to over 88,000 specimens, and the authority file now has almost 178,000 species names and nearly 27,000 genera. Work on the Deep Canyon bombyliids has stopped. It looks like there's still a long way to go, too, as about 23,000 specimens have been completely databased now, but there are another 10-15,000 remaining.

We also had many recent visitors. The first was John Oswald from Texas A&M, who curated our collection of Myrmeleontidae ("Ant Lions") - over 20 drawers' worth! Turns out we have a very good regional collection, including several rarities and interesting locality records. I'm now trying to get a copy of John's database of world Neuroptera, which would be a major addition to the master authority file. Only about 1 million names to go! Next came Chris Dietrich, who went through our entire leafhopper collection and sorted out the good ones from the common garbage, which was actually a major step forward. Next came a major international conference on Parasitic Hymenoptera, organized by John Heraty, and a whole team of people worked in our collection over the course of this conference, including John Huber, Gary Gibson, Gerard Delvare, Jean-Yves Rasplus, and others. This was a great boost to one of the best parts of our collection, and will certainly prove to be of substantial long-term benefit.



Got an idea for a FERM article???

Do you have anything buggo-related that might be of interest for the FERM newsletter? We really would be tickled pinkish if you would send "stuff" in. Remember, this newsletter won't have much in it unless we have material submitted from you folks that we can publish. Feel free to send in photos, articles, recent publications related to insect taxonomy or natural history and even stories about how the Entomology Research Museum has assisted you in your bug-related endeavors. Send them to dyanega@ucr.edu, preferably as attachments (not in email text). Additional information is on the front page of this newsletter.



****Deadline for submission of material for next Newsletter is Jan 1st****

NEW BOOK

A new book is out written for the general public regarding honey bees.

Sweetness & Light: the mysterious history of the honeybee
Hattie Ellis

Harmony Books 244pp. List price is \$23 but Amazon sells it for less than \$16



PINE : PARTNERS IN NATURE EDUCATION

FERM members are entitled to 20% discounts* on the following UCR Extension field nature study courses:

Field Study of the San Andreas Fault: San Bernardino to Mecca Hills

Sat. 8 am-6 pm, Feb. 5. EDP 043-SCF-N22

Ecology of the Palm Oasis

Fri. 5-8 pm, Feb. 25/Sat., Sun. 8 am-5 pm, Feb. 26, 27.
EDP 043-SCF-N28

Geology and Natural History of Death Valley

Sat. 9 am-6 pm, Mar. 12/Sun. 8 am-4 pm, Mar. 13.
EDP 043-SCF-N23



A Field Study of Birds: Spring

Tue. 7:30-9:30 pm, Apr. 19. Field trips all day Sat.
Apr. 23, 30, May 7, 21, June 4.
EDP 044P23

The Greater Roadrunner: A Natural History

Fri. 5:00-8:00 pm, Apr. 22/Sat., Sun. 8:00 am-5:00 pm, Apr. 23, 24.
EDP 044N30

For current listing of courses at any time, bookmark www.unex.ucr.edu/ns/fns1/classes in your web browser.
For further information, contact: Natural Sciences UCR Extension 909.787.5804 909.787.2456 (fax)

*some restrictions apply

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A Note From The Fossil Bed

A Fine Taxonomic Eye

By Saul I. Frommer, Senior Museum Scientist, Emeritus

It was either in 1961 or 1962 that I met Vince D. Roth. At that time, practically fresh out of grad school, I was working on a research project whose ultimate goal was the control of nuisance midges in the family Chironomidae (Diptera). During the years 1960-1962 Vince was employed as an entomological farm advisor for UC Extension Service. We soon became friends and over the years his infectious enthusiasm for the Arachnida, especially the spiders (Araneae), did its magic on my own psyche and I found myself another enthusiast. Vince became the resident director of the American Museum's Southwest Research Station in Portal, AZ. My wife, Suzy, and I would always make it a point to visit with him whenever we made trips to the area. Those times were always an opportunity to learn something or be inspired by one of Vince's many projects or plans. The two of us corresponded through the years and Vince was always able to help me with difficult identifications. Ultimately I would help him by providing the observations of an intelligent ignoramus when I would proof read one of his manuscripts.

In March 1976 Vince and his wife Barbara were spending time in Costa Rica and as it happened so was my sister-in-law Sharon. Sharon, with some friends, was vacationing at this time and one evening she found herself on Playas Naranja, a good surfing beach and one you needed a four-wheel drive vehicle to reach. It so happened that the Roths were at this very same beach and all of these people found themselves talking around a fire during the evening. When Sharon learned of the Roth's insect and arachnid collecting interests (Vince once told me that he didn't care to go to places where spider collecting was not likely to be interesting.) she said "My brother-in-law is an entomologist." To which Vince replied "Oh, you must be Suzy Frommer's sister." When I later learned of this remarkable observation I could do nothing else but marvel at Vince's ability to detect the relationship. We often hear that someone has a good taxonomic eye, but how does one demonstrate that ability in such a way that we can be confident of such a judgment? In this case I know that Vince was able to sort through his memory of faces and out of so many theoretical possibilities come up with a correct assessment of relationship.

We lost Vince on July 22, 1997 to cancer. He was laid to rest in the Paradise Cemetery near Portal, AZ. At the gravesite there is a bronze memorial sculpture of a Hyptiotes web. The dates of Vince's birth and death, he lived a vibrant 73 years, are on the plaque as well as the Haiku by Sokan-

"If someone asks for me...
Say: he had some business
...in another world."

I had always hoped to spend some extended quality time with Vince absorbing as much of his knowledge of spiders as I could. This was not to be. His strong desire to share his knowledge of the spiders with others resulted in the writing of "Spider Genera of North America" which is now in its third edition. A fourth edition based on his work together with additions made by his colleagues is soon to appear. Vince once told me that he knew that there was so much more needed than his initial attempt at a guide could provide yet he felt that it was important to begin the work. This text is his legacy to all of us.

Postscript- My sister-in-law later spent two summers working as an assistant in the laboratory of the late Dr. Harry Shorey who did pioneering work in pheromone research at UCR. Sharon earned funds at UCR for her education and is now professor of Spanish and Comparative Literature at Reed College in Portland, Oregon.

A Note From The Fossil Bed

When You're Looking for a Second Pair of Hands and None is Within Sight

By Saul I. Frommer , Senior Museum Scientist, Emeritus

And

Serguei V. Triapitsyn, Principal Museum Scientist

During 1995 the junior author and Joseph G. Morse, also of the Entomology Department at UCR, conducted a survey of parasitoids of the citrus thrips, *Scirtothrips citri* (Moulton, 1909), in southern California. A number of individuals, I being one of them, assisted Drs. Triapitsyn and Morse in various ways. My involvement was in the field collecting candidate materials. For this work collections were made on citrus plants infested with citrus thrips as well as on laurel sumac. Sweep nets and beating sheets were used to collect insect specimens and candidate materials were stored in 70% ethyl alcohol in the field and later examined in the laboratory. When materials were gathered by sweeping there often was a considerable amount of plant material in the net as well as insect material. It was necessary to move this material into a plastic bag containing alcohol. This proved cumbersome when I was working alone and there was the possibility of losing material during the transfer from insect net to plastic storage bag. In order to make this operation both easy as well as less likely to result in specimen loss I adopted a beaker stand used by chemists to solve the problem. A plastic collecting bag could be placed through the opening of the stand and the bag's end turned down around the circular ring of the stand, alcohol could then easily be poured into the bag without losing it and at this point the insect net could be emptied into the plastic bag. Once emptied the bag was tied and transported to the lab for processing.

The photographs of this device show the stand disassembled as well as assembled with a collecting bag in place, but without alcohol. The fact that the stand is easily disassembled makes it very easy to transport and desirable for the field worker who must deal with the transporting of collecting gear often carried in luggage. The use of this simple device makes the handling of samples



when one is working alone both easy and accurate.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS BY FERM MEMBERS:

Buffington, M. L., R. A. Burks and L. McNeil. 2005. Advanced techniques for imaging parasitic Hymenoptera (Insecta). *American Entomologist* 51 (1): 50-56.

Gonzalez, L., B.V. Brown. 2004. New species and records of *Melaloncha (Udamochiras)* bee-killing flies (Diptera: Phoridae). *Zootaxa* 730: 1-14.

Hoddle, M.S., L.A. Mound, S. Nakahara. 2004. Thysanoptera recorded from California, U.S.A.: a checklist. *Florida Ent.* 87: 317-323.

Logarzo, G.A., Virla, E.G., **Triapitsyn, S.V.,** Jones, W.A. 2004. Biology of *Zagella delicata* (Hymenoptera: Trichogrammatidae), an egg parasitoid of the sharpshooter *Tapajosa rubromarginata* (Hemiptera: Clypeorrhyncha: Cicadellidae) in Argentina. *Florida Ent.* 87: 511-516.

Richman, D. B. and R. S. Vetter. 2004. A review of the spider genus *Thiodina* (Araneae, Salticidae) in the United States. *J. Arachnol.* 32: 418-431.

Triapitsyn, S.V., Fairbairn, C. 2004. Taxonomy and host associations of *Anagrus baeri* Girault, 1912 (Hymenoptera: Mymaridae), an egg parasitoid native to Queensland, Australia. *Russian Ent. J.* 13: 157-159.



IF YOU ARE A MEMBER OF FERM AND HAVE RECENT PUBLICATIONS THAT INVOLVE ARTHROPOD TAXONOMY OR NATURAL HISTORY, PLEASE SUBMIT THE CITATION TO DOUG YANEGA.

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