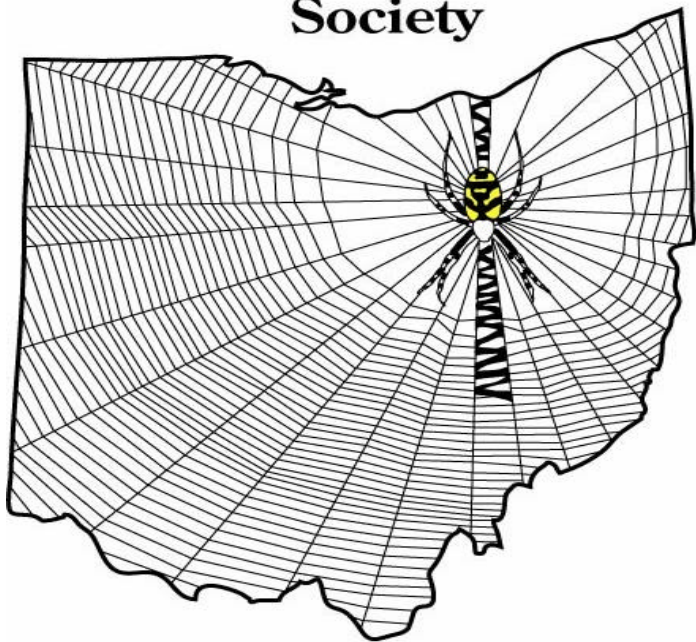


American Arachnological Society



2005 Annual Meeting The University of Akron

Future A.A.S. Annual Meeting Sites

2005 – 26 – 30 June, Akron, Ohio

2006 – College of Notre Dame,
Baltimore, Maryland

PLEASE NOTE !!!

The deadline for submission of 2005 AAS annual meeting materials has been **changed** to

25 May, 2005.

AMERICAN ARACHNOLOGY

is the official newsletter of the American Arachnological Society, and is distributed biannually to members of the Society. Items for the Newsletter should be sent to the Editor, Alan Cady, Dept. Zoology, Miami Univ.-Middletown, 4200 E. Univ. Blvd., Middletown, Ohio, 45042, USA, Voice: (513)727-3258, Fax: (513)727-3450; E-mail: CADYAB@MUOHIO.EDU. Deadline for receipt of material for Volume 72) is 1 October, 2005. All correspondence concerning changes of address and information on membership in the American Arachnological Society should be addressed to the Membership Secretary, Jeffery Shultz, American Arachnological Society, Dept. of Entomology, Univ. of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742; Voice:(301)405-7519, Fax:(301)314-9290, E-mail: JSHULTZ@UMD.EDU. Membership information may be found at the AAS website:<http://WWW.AMERICANARACHNOLOGY.ORG>. Members of the Society also receive the JOURNAL OF ARACHNOLOGY (published triannually) and have access to electronic resources (JOA OnLine).

Newsletter of the American

American Arachnology

Number 71

May

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2005 A.A.S. Annual Meeting
University of Akron
Akron, Ohio

Sunday 26 June - Thursday 30 June

Co-Hosted by:

Maggie Hodge

Todd Blackledge

Sam Marshall

Please note that all information concerning the 2005 Meeting is available online (complete with hyperlinks) at the AAS website (<http://www.americanarachnology.org>). It is preferred that Registration and abstract submission be done via the website.

Note that the registration and submission deadline has been changed to 25 May !!

¹ After this date a \$15 late fee will be applied.

2005 A.A.S. Annual Meeting

University of Akron

Akron, Ohio

Sunday 26 June - Thursday 30 June

Co-Hosted by:
Maggie Hodge
Todd Blackledge
Sam Marshall

We proudly bring the annual meeting to beautiful northeast Ohio, after 3 years of western venues. We think you'll be pleasantly surprised to discover all that this area has to offer. The conference will take place in the brand new [Student Union](#) at the [University of Akron](#). Talks will be in a comfortable theatre with state-of-the-art A.V. facilities. The Union also has a Starbucks, a food court with many dining options, and a Barnes & Noble bookstore.

On campus housing will be in the brand new [Honors Complex Residence Hall](#). Each reasonably priced room (\$35/night single, \$25/night double) has its own bathroom. Every floor has a social lounge and two study lounges, and the residence hall has a computer room, laundry and kitchen facilities. Information on area hotels will be forthcoming on the meeting website.

You can fly into the area via two airports. The [Akron Canton Airport](#) is most convenient, about a 20-30 minute drive from campus. The [Cleveland Hopkins airport](#) is another alternative, and is about a 45 minute drive from campus.

Meeting Highlights

Symposium: This year's symposium is "Spider silk: form and function across biological levels". It will integrate research on the function and evolution of spider silk from diverse perspectives in-

cluding biomechanics, chemical and molecular structure, ecological function, genetic expression, and production of silk. There will be a box to check when you submit your abstract to indicate whether you are interested in participating.

Field Trips: There will be a choice of two field trips on Thursday, June 30. We will organize a **collecting trip** to [the Bath Nature Preserve and Field Station](#). This 404 acre tract was once the country estate of tire magnate Raymond Firestone, and is managed through a partnership between The University of Akron and Bath Township. There will be collecting opportunities in habitats encompassing the range of types found in northeast Ohio.

An **alternative "field" trip** will venture to Cleveland's [Rock and Roll Hall of Fame](#). It takes at least half a day to tour the museum, and there is a restaurant and excellent music store within. We can organize opportunities for dinner in "The Flats", a string of restaurants and brew pubs along the infamous Cuyahoga River, for those interested.

Preliminary Schedule

Sunday, June 26	Check-in & reception
Monday, June 27	Silk symposium Paper sessions
Tuesday, June 28	Paper sessions Poster session Informal evening
Wednesday, June 29	Paper sessions Business Meeting Banquet & Student Awards, Auction
Thursday, June 30	Field Trips

Instructions for arrival to the meetings

Expect to receive a parking permit via email approximately one week prior to the meeting. Follow the directions to the university and park in lot #37. Proceed to the Student Union. General registration will begin in the main atrium of the student union on Sunday, June 26th from 10am until 9pm. Registration packets will include your room assignment and dormitory key. For those arriving on subsequent days, registration will begin at 8am and run until 1pm.

Linens are provided for all dormitory guests.

Weather

Meeting participants can expect comfortable Midwestern summer weather, which means anything from hot, sunny days to drenching downpours. Average temperatures for late June range from highs in the 80 s to lows in the 60 s. It will likely be sunny and pleasant but you should be prepared for rain showers, particularly in the afternoon.

Field trips

The **collecting trip** to the University's Bath Nature Preserve will include a picnic style lunch at our new field station. You will be free to roam the 404 acre preserve, which was once the country estate of tire magnate Raymond Firestone. The preserve maintains a mixture of grasslands, mesophytic deciduous forests, riparian forests, wetlands, peatlands, ponds and streams. All participants will have permits to collect arachnids and microscopes along with other basic laboratory facilities will be available within the field station. Transportation and lunch will be included.

The **Rock and Roll Hall of Fame field trip** will take participants to one of the most popular tourist destinations in Cleveland. You should plan to spend at least half a day at the museum itself, which includes a large music store and a café. Afterwards, there will be opportunities for dinner and beverages in The Flats, an area of restaurants and brew pubs along the Cuyahoga River. In addition, participants may want to visit the nearby Great Lakes Science Center where they can investigate the traveling exhibit Body Worlds 2: The anatomical exhibition of real human bodies. This exhibit by Gunther von Hagen features more than 200 hundred authentic plastinated human specimens. This is a great opportunity to learn more about these very, very distant cousins of arachnids. Participants are responsible for their own admission tickets and food. A combination pass for both the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and the GLSC Body Works 2 exhibit is \$35 for adults. Admission to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame alone is \$20. Transportation is provided.

The local area

The university is located on the edge of downtown Akron. The campus is compact so that the dormitory is a quick walk to the meeting venue. Participants staying at the Crown Plaza will be within a 10 minute walk of the venue. All meeting activities will be held in the Student Union, which includes a food court that offers a variety of sandwiches, pasta, salads, subs, Chinese food, pizza, etc for lunch. The union also offers an ATM, postal services, Star-

bucks, bookstore, and downstairs lounge with bowling and billiards.

The local downtown area includes a number of nice restaurants. Nearby Cuyahoga Falls offers opportunity to dine at several elegant restaurants against a backdrop of the cascading Cuyahoga river. There are also a variety of pubs and nightclubs in downtown Akron for evening entertainment. They range from casual live music at the Lime Spider to the posh martini bar Fuel. We will provide an overview of suggested restaurants and evening entertainment with registration materials.

The local area around Akron boasts a number of beautiful metroparks and historical sites related to the system of canals that once linked the Ohio River to Lake Erie. Akron is also the southern gateway to the 30 mile long Cuyahoga River Valley National Park, which offers a variety of easy access trails to explore the valley's natural and historic sites.

Driving Instructions

From the North, Taking I-77

Follow I-77 southbound and exit onto Wolf Ledges/Grant Street. Turn left at the first light onto Wolf Ledges, or left at the second light onto Grant Street. Both roads lead to Exchange Street on the south edge of campus.

From the North, Taking Route 8

Exit at Perkins Street. Turn right, then left onto Union Street and proceed to Buchtel Avenue.

From the South, Taking I-77/Route 8

Follow The University of Akron exit off Route 8 marked Buchtel Avenue/Carroll Street. Turn left onto Carroll to reach campus.

From the West, Taking I-76

Follow I-76 eastbound and exit onto Wolf Ledges/Grant Street. Turn left at the first light onto Wolf Ledges, or left at the second light onto Grant Street. Both roads lead to Exchange Street on the south edge of campus.

From the East, Taking I-76

From the East, Taking I-76 Follow I-76 west into Akron. Take the right fork off I-76 west to Route 8 north. The first exit off Route 8 is Bechtel/Carroll. Turn left at Carroll to reach campus.

NOTE: Maps may be found on page 14

2005 Meeting of the American Arachnological Society

University of Akron

Akron, Ohio

Sunday 26 June – Thursday 30 June, 2005

Hosts: Maggie Hodge, Todd Blackledge & Sam Marshall

This form can be used for registration or you can register online at <http://www.americanarachnology.org> (you can also pay online through paypal). Registration and abstract submission through the website is preferred but not required!

Deadlines:

May 20 registration and abstract submission deadline. After , a late fee will be charged (see below) and you must contact the hosts for permission to present a paper or poster.

Deadline is 25 May 2005

Personal Information

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Affiliation _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State/Province: _____

Country: _____ Zip code/country code: _____

e-mail: _____ Phone & FAX: _____

Registration Fees

_____ \$80 - AAS Member _____ \$110 - AAS Member PLUS 1 Non-participant guest *

_____ \$95 - Non-Member _____ \$135 - Non-Member PLUS 1 Non-participant guest *

_____ \$50 - AAS Student member

_____ \$70 - Non- AAS Student (*Join AAS for \$25 student membership and register at the lower rate!*)

_____ \$40 - Non-participant (Taking part in breaks and socials)

Name of non-participant guest(s): _____

_____ \$15 Late Fee per person (if you register and/or pay after 25 May)

Special Events (please check all those events you plan to attend and include fees if relevant)

_____ Sunday evening welcome social (26 June)

_____ Wednesday evening (29 June) banquet and auction (\$35 regular; \$30 student)

Check which meal you would like if you are going to attend the banquet:

_____ Grilled Herb Chicken entrée

_____ Vegetarian Napoleon (portabella mushrooms, zucchini, ect. on bed of rice)

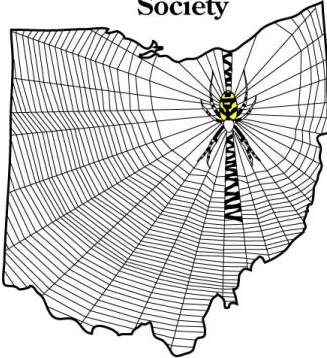
____ Thursday (30 June) field/collecting trip to the Bath Nature Preserve (\$15)

____ Thursday (30 June) field trip to Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame (\$15 + admission)

Photo & Shirts (shirt design below)

____ Group photo (\$10)

American Arachnological Society



**2005 Annual Meeting
The University of Akron**

Tan shirts (\$15 each): ____ Small; ____ Medium; ____ Large; ____ XLarge; ____ XXL;

Other (indicate size) _____

Light green shirts (\$15 each): ____ Small; ____ Medium; ____ Large; ____ XLarge;

____ XXL; Other (indicate size) _____

Housing

Honors Complex Dormitories (indicate the nights you will be staying in a single or double:

Single \$39/night +tax:

____ June 26 ____ June 27 ____ June 28 ____ June 29 ____ June 30

Double \$28/night + tax:

____ June 26 ____ June 27 ____ June 28 ____ June 29 ____ June 30

Roommate name _____

____ Check here if you need us to find you a roommate.

The most convenient hotel to the meeting is the **Crown Plaza at Quaker Square**. The hotel is a pleasant 10 minute walk to campus. It is across from Quaker Square, a renovated mill building with numerous shops and restaurants. A block of 30 rooms has been reserved for meeting participants, though you must reserve your room by May 26, as the rooms go back into general inventory after that date. The rate is \$89/night + 6.75% Ohio Sales Tax. Call **330-253-5970** to reserve a room, and mention the meeting, and the Friends of University of Akron rate.

Meals

If you will be driving there is the usual variety of (cheaper) hotel/motel chains to choose from. Every meeting participant will get a parking permit to park on campus in their registration packet. Breakfasts can be purchased at various restaurants in the Student Union. Light refreshments will be served during the morning and afternoon breaks. A restaurant guide and map will be included in the registration packet.

Miscellaneous

If you have items for the annual arachno-auction (during the banquet) you can mail them to Todd Blackledge at the address below. If you plan to bring items instead of mailing them in advance, please let Todd know how many and what items you plan to bring.

Todd Blackledge Dept. of Biology 185 ASEC-W University of Akron Akron, OH 44325-3908

Reprints: Do you have stacks of old reprints cluttering your office shelves? Bring them to the meeting to exchange with colleagues. We will have a room available during the meeting where reprints will be available for exchange.

AAAFF: We will try to put together some talks for the Arachnological Association for the Absorption of Federal Funds (AAAFF) during the Casual Night with Arachnids, depending on a critical mass of contributions. Please indicate whether you have a AAAFF presentation for the meeting.

_____ Check here if you have a presentation.

Presenters Name: _____

Title: _____

Abstract: no more than 100 words. Please send as either an e-mail attachment, or on a separate sheet of paper with your registration).

Casual Night with Arachnids: The traditional informal presentations will be held on Tuesday evening (28 June) from 7 - 9 p.m. In the past, these presentations have been free-form. There will be a time limit of no more than 15 minutes. Please indicate below whether you plan to give a presentation. We will opening this "Casual Evening With Arachnids" up to the general public. Therefore, please expect a few non-arachnologists in the audience and be prepared to include more background information or explanatory information in your presentation than you might have otherwise included. *Also, keep it clean!*

_____ Check here if you have a presentation (no abstract necessary).

Presenters Name: _____

Title: _____

Payment Totals

Registration: \$ _____ T-shirt: \$ _____

Banquet: \$ _____ Group Photo: \$ _____

Field Trip: \$ _____

Housing: \$ _____

Late Fee: \$ _____ (if applicable)

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____

Please make your check payable to "AAS Meeting 2005" or pay and/or register online through paypal at <http://www.americanarachnology.org>

If you are not registering/paying online, send registration form, abstract and payment to:

Maggie Hodge
6256 Olde Eight Road
Peninsula, OH 44264

All payments must be received by 25 May 2005 to avoid the late registration fee.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Abstract Submission

Type of presentation:

- Oral (15 min total incl. questions)
 Poster*
 Silk Symposium paper**
 AAAFF (enter details above)
 Casual presentation for Tuesday (enter details above)
 Not presenting

*Posters must fit in a space absolutely no more than 4 ft X 4 ft.

Check here if you would like to be considered for the student competition. This is open to any student who has not previously won the student competition. Former runners-up may enter.

Circle the category below that best describes your formal presentation:

Anatomy/Physiology Behavior Evolution Ecology Systematics/Taxonomy

Presenter's Name: _____

Presenter's e-mail: _____

Title of oral presentation or poster: _____

First author's name: _____

Institution: _____

Second author's name: _____

Institution: _____

Third author's name: _____

Institution: _____

Abstracts should be no more than 250 words. Presentation title, authors' names and institutions are not included in the word count. Do not include your full address.

(An example abstract is available on the AAS website)

Please indicate below how your abstract is/was sent:

- Abstract on 3.5" diskette (PC formatted) included
 Abstract submitted online at <http://www.americanarachnology.org>
 Paper copy of abstract included

Check all audio visual needs for your presentation:

- PowerPoint
 slide projector
 overhead projector
 VCR
 Other: please describe _____

STUDENT PAPER PRESENTATION AWARD GUIDELINES

I. ELIGIBILITY

A. The student should submit a copy of the paper's abstract* to the meeting organizer by the specified deadline (25 May, 2005). A letter containing a statement from the student's major professor or supervisor indicating the extent to which the work was independently developed and executed by the student also must be sent to the meeting host**. The name and mailing address of the Meeting Host are:

Dr. Todd Blackledge; Dept. of Biology; University of Akron; Akron, OH 44325-3908

(330) 972-7264 blackledge@uakron.edu

*The abstract may be submitted via the A.A.S. Website

**The letter should be sent either electronically or by post to the host

B. The presentation either represents independent or joint research in which the student's contribution has been substantial. In case of a co-authored paper the student presenting the paper must be first author.

C. Entry is limited to one standard research paper per meeting.

D. Previous winners of the Student Paper award are not eligible.

II. JUDGES

A. A panel of three judges will be appointed by the President-Elect before the meeting. The abstracts of all student papers and a copy of the judging guidelines will be mailed to each judge prior to the meeting. An appropriate number of evaluation sheets (listing the criteria as below) shall accompany the abstract package for each judge. Judges will be chosen from different disciplines (systematics, morphology, physiology, ecology, behavior).

B. Efforts should be made to avoid bias or conflict of interest in judging, either by appointing judges with no students in the competition or, if that is unavoidable, by having judges abstain from voting on their own students.

C. Judges should meet twice: once before the paper presentation to review the guidelines and once afterward to make a decision on ranking.

D. At least one hour should be available between the last eligible presentation and the scheduled announcement of the award.

III. EVALUATION

A. Judges should rate presentations as "Outstanding, Good, Adequate, or Poor" based on the criteria listed below. In co-authored papers, the judges will carefully evaluate the student's contribution to the presented research. In case of a tie or very close ranking, the judges may decide on a joint award.

B. Scientific Criteria

1. Introduction:

- Was there a clear introduction to the research problem?
- Was the importance of the research question explained? Why was the work done?
- Did the speaker provide a background and context for the research? What was the state of the field prior to this study? A review of the entire field is not necessary, but the speaker must provide a reference framework in which to assess the work.
- Was a clear statement of the hypothesis(es) provided?

2. Methods:

- Was there a clear explanation of the techniques used in the project?
- How creative was the work? If the presentation involved techniques commonly used by the advisor, did the student utilize the technique to approach novel issues or novel questions?

3. Results:

- Were the results of the study a valuable contribution to the field? Was the significance of the results clearly demonstrated? Could the student convince the audience they should care about their results?!

- Were the experiments or results approached from several perspectives?

4. Discussion & Conclusions:

- Were the results well summarized and placed in context relative to the introduction?

- How sound were the conclusions?

- Did the student extend the work beyond other projects associated with their advisor, or was it simply a minor increment of similar work?

- Was the research sufficiently independent, unique, or creative?

- Were the conclusions put in a broader context extending the value of the work beyond a small area in arachnology to better understanding within the field of systematics/behavior/ ecology/ etc?

5. Presentation Style and Logistics (oral):

- Did the speaker speak clearly and logically or was the organization of the talk confused and disorganized? Did the speaker communicate clearly and easily? Was eye contact made with the audience, or was the paper simply read from notes or the screen?

- Were the graphics lucid? Were all of the figures intelligible with axes clearly labeled? Were tables broken into decipherable segments? Did the student clearly put effort into making the graphics used for the talk self-explanatory or informative?

- Were the techniques used explained with a minimal use of specialist jargon so that a non-specialist or non-scientist could understand how the project was done?

- Did the student project a professional demeanor, or were unnecessary "humor", inappropriate references, or excessive excuses made?

- How poised was the speaker? Was the presentation "timed" correctly?

- How well did the speaker respond to questions?

6. Presentation Style and logistics (poster):

- Was the poster clearly organized and well planned or was it clearly done at the last minute?

- Were the graphics lucid? Were all of the figures intelligible with axes clearly labeled? Were tables broken into decipherable segments? Were the text, tables, and graphics self-explanatory or informative?

- Were the techniques used clearly explained with a minimal use of specialist jargon, such that a non-specialist or non-scientist could understand how the project was done?

- Was the poster clearly arranged such that there was minimal text for maximal effect? Were the visuals used appropriate for the point being made?

- How well did the presenter respond to questions?

IV. ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES

Traditionally, the award is announced at the society's banquet. However, this year awards will be announced at the society business meeting on Sunday. We are trying out this new venue for student award announcements as

an incentive for more student involvement with the "inner workings" of the Society. Students are strongly encouraged to attend the banquet as well since this is an ideal setting to "schmooze" with established arachnologists and to see George Uetz, auctioneer extraordinaire, and his minions, at their best.

V. AWARDS

The top ranking and runner-up individuals traditionally receive a monetary award. Other awards vary according to donations and other philanthropy.

SAMPLE JUDGING SHEET

Name of Student: _____

Co-authors: _____

Title of Paper: _____

OVERALL RATING - _____

Scientific criteria:

- Clarity of Introduction; background & context.
- Abstract; summarize main results of research?
- Scope of research problem; hypothesis(es) stated?
- Approach, design, and creativity of study
- Quality and details of analysis; clearly explained?
- Significance of results; different perspectives used?
- Soundness of conclusions; relation to Introduction?
- Contribution to field; impact outside immediate field?

Rating of Scientific Criteria - _____

Presentation (oral):

- Overall organization and clarity; proper timing?
- Oral presentation skill; presence, poise, & demeanor.
- Graphics were high quality and easy to read and interpret.
- Ability to respond to questions.

Rating of Oral Presentation Criteria - _____

Presentation (poster):

- Overall organization and clarity
- Minimal text for maximal effect?
- Graphics were high quality and easy to read and interpret.
- Ability to respond to questions.

Rating of Poster Presentation Criteria - _____

HINTS ON GIVING A GREAT RESEARCH PRESENTATION

Thanks to **Linda Rayor!**

Scientific Criteria:

- Give a clear introduction to your research problem. Provide a background to your research and inform the audience about the state of the field prior to this study. You need not provide a review of the entire field, but your listeners deserve to have your contribution to the field put into context. Explain the *importance* of your research question and why the work is of value.
- Clearly state the hypothesis(es) tested.
- Clearly explain the techniques or experiments used in the project. Explicitly describe any novel or uncommon apparatus or protocol.

- Explain your results clearly. The audience only has a minute or two to digest the content of your figures, so make the figures easy to read and to understand (uncluttered). It is often much better to present smaller portions of your data rather than large, unintelligible tables or figures ("less is best"). Provide telegraphic titles that help the audience grasp the meaning of the results more easily. Try to minimize abbreviations and jargon that only you understand. Basically, make it *easy* for your audience to understand your data as you guide them through it.
- Explain why the results of your study are a valuable contribution to your field. In your talk or poster, you should put the research in context so that the audience *cares* about your results. Do your conclusions extend beyond a small question in arachnology? Does your work contribute to better understanding within the broader field of systematics/ behavior/ ecology, etc.?

Presentation Style & Logistics:

- It is much easier to understand a talk or poster that is logically organized rather than one that is confused and disorganized.
- As indicated above, your graphics should be lucid and easy to follow. Are your figures intelligible with the axes clearly labeled? Without you talking or you being present, would it be possible to look at the graphics and interpret the figures? Are the tables broken into intelligible segments? Are your graphics self-explanatory and informative?
- Few biologists are specialists in everything. For those biologists who work outside of your area of specialty, it is helpful if you explain your project with minimal use of specialist jargon or explain the unusual terms in your presentation. Your project should be understood by anyone in the audience, regardless of his or her field of expertise.
- You should project a professional demeanor. While humor may lighten a talk or a poster, humor that misses the mark can be jarring. Groveling excuses about problems with your data or your slides or visuals, inappropriate jabs at members of the audience, or private jokes generally do not go over well in a professional setting.

From Paula Cushing:

To U.S. collectors: please consider using the Denver Museum of Nature & Science (approved abbreviation DMNH) as the repository for your specimens, particularly those collected west of the Mississippi in the Rocky Mountain/Great Plains ecoregions. This relatively new repository for arachnids is curated by Paula Cushing. Identified specimens will be databased immediately and the information made electronically available within a year at the following website: [HTTP://WWW.DMNS.ORG/SPIDERS/INDEX.HTML](http://www.dmns.org/spiders/index.html)
Click on the database tab at this website to view the information made available to users and to view the searchable data fields.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The American Arachnological Society Final Financial Report 31 December 2004

\$64,487.39	Total Assets, end of 2003	\$57,449.48
\$43,720.25	Balance in Checking Account, end of 2003 Savings Bank of Walpole, #301-097501	\$36,914.17
	Deposits	
\$17.47	Membership	\$43,619.70
\$12,321.49	paypal	\$
	checks & wires	\$
\$30.00	Page Charges	\$1,500.00
\$675.00	Revenue from OK Meeting	\$967.00
	Sales, Spider Genera	\$230.00
	BioOne Revenue Share	\$5,957.50
	Color plate charge col.	\$600.00
	McGraw Hill	\$1,000.00
	From ISA for Congress issue	\$6,035.56
	Interest	\$71.73
\$240.00		
\$1,000.00		
\$2,020.00		
\$56.20		
\$3,316.20		
	Expenses	
	Co-collected dues	\$7,268.00
	Allen Press, publishing, elec. Publis, buyer's guide, services	\$24,094.32
	Honoraria to editor & associate editors	\$5,000.00
	Postage, mailing expenses,	\$600.33
	AIBS membership	\$100.00
	Student research and paper, poster awards	\$3,365.00
	Newsletter	\$1,000.00
	2005 OH conference seed money	\$2,020.00
\$20,767.14		
\$77.29		
\$20,844.43		
\$74,292.44		
	Balance in Checking Account at end of 2004	\$53,448.01
	Certificate of Deposit Account at Savings Bank of Walpole #600401944	
	Balance on 31 Dec 03	\$20,535.31
	Interest this year (2004)	\$309.12
	Balance on 31-Dec-04	\$20,844.43
	TOTAL ASSETS	\$74,292.44

Respectfully submitted,

Karen R. Cangialosi, Treasurer
American Arachnological Society
Dept. of Biology, Keene State College, Keene NH 03435

A contribution from Maximilian Werner

Instructor of English, Arizona State University

My relationship with the black widow is, of course, another story. I've been watching her now for about three months, which is a long time in the life of a spider. I have watched her mature from a juvenile to a full-fledged adult. I haven't always been so sure of her whereabouts, however, nor of her well-being. One night about two weeks ago I went outside to check on her and she was nowhere in sight. Normally well-tended, her web was in disrepair. Not a good sign. I flashed my light on the entrance to her lair and saw nothing. I felt myself excite with worry. Had she been killed? What had happened?

Thinking that she might be coming out after I had gone to bed, over the next three or four nights, I went out a few hours later and checked to see if she had repaired her web. Instead of improving, the web fell into greater and greater disrepair, until finally all that was left was the scaffolding. I was convinced that she was gone. But then I thought back to the last night I saw her and realized there was another explanation. On that particular evening she had done very well for herself by capturing a cricket and a large cockroach, as well as three of several honey bees that were, strangely, wandering about long after dark. I went out the next morning expecting to see her victims wrapped in silk, but they were gone. Not until a few days after the widow had disappeared did I remember this last detail. Once I did, however, everything began to fall into place. I remembered the appearance of her abdomen in the days leading to her disappearance, how it seemed inflated, like a tiny black balloon. Perhaps she was preparing to spin her egg sac, in which case her cache of prey would get her through the lean days ahead. There was only one way for me to find out.

According to my calendar, the last night I saw her was September 29. Four days later, on October 2, I decided to test my theory. I went out about an hour after dark. The evenings are now cool here in the Sonora Desert, so as usual, the cats were eager to join me. Perhaps a bit too eager. We have two cats: Winston, an eight year old male, and Bella Jean, a one-and-a-half-year-old female. Winston and I have lived together for long time and we know each other's routines pretty well. He therefore tends to give me plenty of space when I'm trying to conduct my research. Bella Jean, however, is more likely to chase the orb of the flashlight right into the widow's web. On the evening of October 2, however, there was no web that she could destroy. I don't know why it hadn't occurred to me sooner, but on that night I decided to lie on my belly and flash my light into the widow's lair. A corridor stretched some ten inches straight back into the bush. At the end of it, suspended in the air like a tiny moon, was an egg sac. I didn't see the widow at first because she was behind the sac. Then I saw her slender legs cradling the precious contents. Today is October 13 and she is still guarding her brood. After two weeks of maternity, her once swollen abdomen is now not even half its previous size. She appears shrunken and lackluster, a living ruin.

I have not seen the widow for the last three days, nor have I seen her egg sac. I am not too alarmed by the disappearance of the egg sac, however, because she has on one occasion moved it to some other chamber in her lair, a short time after which she promptly returned it to the original spot, where it remained until three nights ago. And so here I am again, wondering and worrying a little. Has she and her young been preyed on? Or has she moved the egg sac deeper into her lair? As a result of my first experience with her disappearance, I must say that I am now much more open to the possibility that life, although hidden from view, goes on somewhere deep inside her lair. Perhaps one of the challenges of trying to understand a particular behavior is not to forget that the behavior occurs in the context of the creature's entire life. I began this inquiry by trying to understand why the black widow would appear at dusk even though doing so would seem to put her at risk. I then speculated that she appeared when female crickets began their search for males. I therefore had to correlate the appearance of the black widow with the first sign of wandering female crickets. This required me to go out night after night in order to time the appearance of the widow and the crickets. Over the next two months or so, my hypothesis was supported by the fact that the widow would appear roughly an hour before the crickets started wandering. Consequently, I developed expectations, so much so that when the widow failed to appear that night after gorging herself on honey bees, a cricket, and a cockroach, I panicked. One exception to the rule called into question the accuracy of two months' worth of data.

The inability to anticipate the anomalous can be dangerous, but the danger is not solely academic: it is one thing to lose two months of data, but it is quite another to have one's very life threatened. A couple of weeks ago I was outside on the patio rearranging some furniture and plants. Kim and I bought several plants to adorn the patio area, one of which is a purslane. Initially I hung this plant to encourage growth, but after the hanging pot broke and the plant fell, I placed the plant in a clay pot and set it on a small patio table. The plant was looking a little weak, so I decided to move it to the other side of the patio where it would enjoy more sunlight. Potted, the plant weighs about twenty pounds and therefore requires two hands to transport it. The thick, leafy stems grew out over the sides of the pot, so I had to slide my hands between them and the pot to avoid damaging the plant. A couple seconds after doing just that, I felt something prick my right index finger.

At first I thought maybe I had poked my finger on a piece of plant debris or on the pot itself. That explanation changed, however, when I noticed my finger was numb in the area where it had been pricked. I returned the plant to the little table and carefully lifted the leafy stems. I didn't see anything, so I turned my attention to my finger, which was now even number than it was a moment before. As I studied the endmost segment of my finger, I saw what I thought was a tiny puncture. Had I been bitten? I looked at the plant again, except this time I lifted the stems above the rim of the pot.

I don't think I can fully convey what I felt when I saw the black widow. She was tucked into a position that was both defensive and anticipatory, as though she were waiting to see what I was going to do now that she had bitten me. I couldn't help but see the humor in being bitten.

Over the last couple of months I had begun to think of myself not necessarily as an expert in spider behavior, but I knew that I was a more knowledgeable arachnologist than my in-laws, for instance. I also remember thinking that I pretty much knew that I was going to be bitten. Roy Horn was mauled by a white tiger. I was bitten by a black widow. Makes sense to me! The humor was short-lived, however. Because then I started to feel afraid, which then turned into mild terror, which as the moments passed threatened to mushroom into a full-blown panic attack.

Fortunately I had dealt with panic before. As I walked into the house to put on some clothes for my trip to the emergency room I said to myself "Be cool." In the end I decided against going to the ER and instead knocked on my neighbors Elia and Brenda's door. I tried to be cool when Brenda opened the door, but by the look on her face, I wasn't doing a very good job. In fairness to me, I still managed to measure my words and to make light of the situation by offering a nervous smile or two. Brenda is a nurse, so she was careful not to show any alarm that may exacerbate my anxiousness. After agreeing to drive me to the ER if necessary, she gave me the number to the Center for Poison Control and advised me to call them for assistance.

I felt better knowing that Brenda knew I had been bitten, and I was grateful that she was there to help. I also felt a little annoyed, however. Although Brenda meant well, as she wrote down the number for the CPC, she reminded me that sometimes it takes *hours* for the venom of a black widow bite to take effect. I was just trying to deal with the crisis of the *moment*, and here she was reminding me of what might happen *hours* from now? Maybe I didn't need neighborly insta-care after all. When I got back to my house, I called Kim to let her know that her husband and the father of her soon-to-be-born child had just been bitten by a black widow. But I first made the usual inquiries about her day and then I said "You're not going to believe this." In reality, nothing could be further from the truth. In fact she's come to expect at least one or two "unbelievable" stories from me each time I return from a hike in the desert or a from a fishing trip in the mountains. (Two days ago, for instance, I was walking in the Superstition Mountains and was charged by a javelina whose retreat I had found. Kim was not thrilled). She has always been interested in my well-being, of course, but now that we are about to have our first child, she is especially interested. I didn't want to cause her and the baby stress so I tried to hide my nervousness as I explained what had happened.

When you've known someone as long as Kim and I have known each other – almost 18 years -- it is very difficult to conceal *anything*, even such seemingly private things as emotions. Once the voice gets involved, what is *difficult* to conceal becomes *impossible* to conceal. I therefore wasn't surprised when the timbre of Kim's voice began to more closely match my own. I explained what had happened as well as what I intended to do. Kim did a much better job of dealing with her worry, which she did by asking simple questions. Was I experiencing any symptoms? And was I sure it was a black widow? I was anxious to contact the CPC, so I did the best I could to quickly answer Kim's questions: apart from the numbness in my finger, no, I wasn't experiencing any symptoms. And yes, I was sure it was a black widow.

Kim insisted that she stay on the line while I called the CPC. I called and talked to a man whose name I have since forgotten. Once he had acquired all the necessary information, including my age, health, and when and where on my body I was bitten, he told me what symptoms to watch for and to go to the emergency room should I experience any of the more serious reactions, including vomiting, chest pain, and respiratory difficulties. He made a point of reminding me that these latter symptoms usually only threaten the very young or the very old. I was relieved; that is, at least until he said he'd call me again in a couple of hours to make sure I was alright.

Over the next two hours I did what I could to relax. In order to control my anxiety, I started thinking through what had happened. I was encouraged by the fact that the spider was still a juvenile. In contrast to the adult females, the juveniles are typically brown with four crisp, boomerang-shaped slashes of white on the top of their abdomen, but I have seen other juveniles with two parallel white slashes flanked by a red slash on either side. Their beauty is strikingly reminiscent of the etchings on Navajo pottery. This knowledge helped a little, but then I started wondering about the line between the juvenile and adult stages of the female widow's life. How fine is it? At what point does her venom become dangerous to humans?

Fortunately the door bell rang before I could pursue these thoughts any further. Elia, Brenda's husband, had stopped by to check on me. I told him that apart from a mild numbness at the site of the bite and a little anxiousness, I was fine. I even joked that perhaps I had some immunity, and that I would therefore become the marvel of the arachnological community. "That's good, man," he said in his soft-spoken way, "but remember it sometimes takes hours for the venom to take effect." I fantasized about slamming the door in Elia's face, but I just smiled and said "That's what I hear."

Now that Elia was gone, I could return to my earlier ruminations. What puzzled me was why the black widow was in the plant in the first place. It just didn't make any sense. I have probably seen twenty black widow webs around my house over the last two years, and not one of them was constructed in a place like the purslane plant. Actually, there wasn't really a web at all. No scaffolding, no capture fibers; just a juvenile black widow and a scraggily rag of silk no bigger than a quarter. The data had simply not prepared me for this anomaly. But that is the nature of data, is it not? For even while data are used to gain insights into the nature of the species as a whole, the whole itself is comprised of *individuals*, any one of which may for whatever reason deviate from the average or the mean measure of the population.

I was lucky: for a number of reasons I will never know for sure, apart from a mild numbness at the site, I did not have a reaction to the black widow's venom. This may have been because she didn't have the venom to inject in the first place, or if she did, realizing I was not prey, she injected only enough to warn me. This seems unlikely, however, when I consider how other juvenile poisonous creatures (e.g., the rattlesnake) have little incentive to regulate their venom. Perhaps the *adult* could control the amount of venom injected, but the young, which lack the experience needed to distinguish threats, and which are therefore more

vulnerable to predation, do not seem nearly as discriminating. The other possibility is that I have some resistance to the venom. But I wouldn't bet on it.

A few days later I went to check on my assailant and discovered she was no longer there. Surprisingly, I was disappointed by her absence. I was looking forward to watching her molt into a full-fledged adult, just as I had seen happen to the black widow on the east side of the house. I admit that after being bitten I considered destroying all the widows around my house, but thinking it through, I decided doing so would somehow violate my contract with the different species of spider in my yard. Black widows, jumping spiders, or spitting spiders, the little orb weaver's web with its stabilimenta, they all were important to me. I wasn't about to sacrifice all this in response to a mini-venomation. Through my observations of the orb weaver, I gained insight into a world that is seldom fathomed and that, despite the fact, is no less a part of this larger enterprise we call life. Though it may seem human life and the lives of other creatures are separate at worst and contiguous at best, my backyard adventures suggest that the extent to which our lives truly overlap and intersect is by far greater than any distance between them.

Knowing that our reactions to other creatures are both biased and mediated by our biological past and culture, the latter often exploiting our predispositions for less than amiable purposes, how is it possible for us to overcome our conditioning so that we may enjoy more meaningful, *realistic*, and sustainable relationships with other creatures? Certainly there are many ways to answer this question. I started my own journey by trying to attend to some of the creatures with which I live. Simply *noticing* other creatures is an important first step toward understanding and enjoying these fascinating neighbors. Different creatures will appeal to and affect us differently, of course, but in general I find very few ways of passing the time that even *begin* to compare with the entertainment and educational value of watching a spider for *fifteen* minutes. Add to this the fact that I am talking about a single individual of a single species, and the idea elevates from amazing to nearly incomprehensible.

That I struggle to notice other creatures illustrates the depth of the difficulty we face as a species and members of a particular culture. But as I think my reflections show, it is possible to recognize and compensate for our particular predispositions. Perhaps that is one of the great gifts of ecological thought: as the study of relatedness, ecology enables and encourages us to notice specific aspects of the world around us, including other creatures. Rather than thinking of the particular creature as isolated, ecology posits the creature as intimately tied to its environment. One could say that individual creatures are *expressions* or embodiments of their environment, so much so that if one wishes to know more about the creature, one must also understand the environment on which the creature depends. Given the complexity of the environment, understanding a creature is quite an undertaking, to be sure, but it is one that promises many hours, perhaps even a lifetime, of enjoyment.

Our biology is not the only barrier to our enjoyment, however: Cultural attitudes represent a whole new set of challenges. Here in North America, for instance, we tend

to classify other animals as either cuddly, Bambi-like creatures, or as incarnations of evil whose intentions are to do us harm. The other animals of the world (and, don't forget, tornados) would appear to fall somewhere between these two extremes, that is, assuming we acknowledge them at all. Interesting how irrelevant these classifications are to the spiders I encountered in my yard. They don't even come close to clarifying the lives of these creatures. Despite our attitudes here in this country, however, even the most cursory look at other cultural attitudes toward the spider shows that human culture need not be hostile or indifferent toward, nor misrepresent, other creatures.

My neighbor Elia, for example, is a member of the Hausa tribe in Nigeria. His people believe that spiders have great wisdom, and they are therefore treated with great respect. But I do not need to look as far as West Africa to find examples of cultures that revere spiders. Here in the Southwest, the Navajo people revere Spider Woman, a god-like being that created all other life forms, including humans, and then connected them with threads of silk. This is a beautiful story, to say the least, but it is also humbling: in a remarkable reversal, instead of a white haired, white robed deity, *Spider Woman* created humankind. Then she placed us together with all the other creatures in the same web of life. According to this a-hierarchical view of life, then, we are special, but so too is everything else.

These stories, and many others, show that our accounts of other creatures can teach respect without engendering fear and hostility. But as I think these accounts and my own burgeoning, ecological perspective show, the degree to which we respect other creatures is deeply informed by how well we understand them and the world we share. True, understanding another creature (let alone the world!) is extremely difficult (I hear the astronomers exclaiming, "You've got it so easy!"), but isn't it wonderful that we can pursue such an all-important and rewarding ambition in our own Sonoran yards?

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Arachno - Auction !!

Be sure to comb your closets and bookshelves for materials suitable for contribution to the auction held after the banquet at the AAS meeting.

Materials may be sent to Todd Blackledge (see page 6).

Remember, "one man's trash is another man's treasure"!

World Spider Catalog Version 5.5

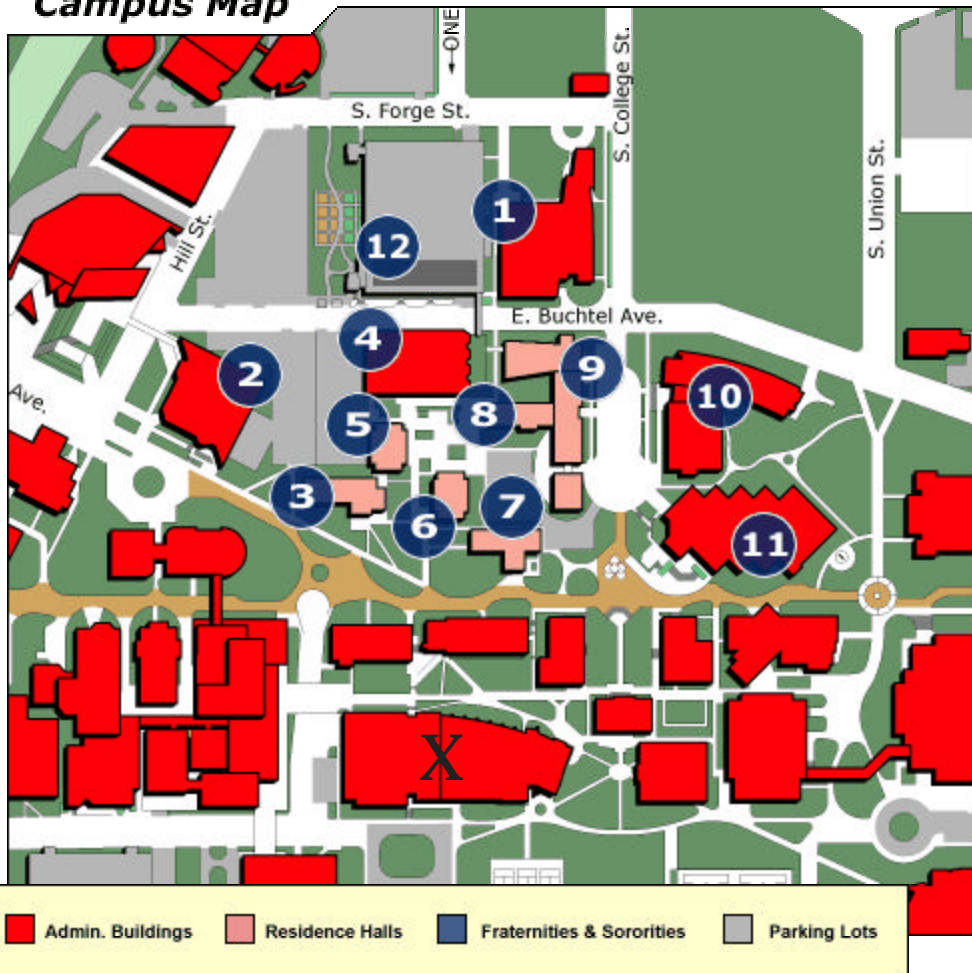
This work by Norm Platnick and edited by Peter Merrett and H. Don Cameron may be accessed at the following URL

<http://research.amnh.org/entomology/spiders/catalog/index.html>

Or, you may link by ctrl-clicking [here](#).



Campus Map



Click here to link to the full [University of Akron Campus Map](#). This map allows you to zoom into any area of the campus.

Number 9 on the map to the left is the Honors Complex Residence Hall (180 South College Street).

The Student Union is the building marked **X** (303 Carroll St.).

American Arachnology

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AMERICAN ARACHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY WEBSITE

[HTTP://WWW.AMERICANARACHNOLOGY.ORG](http://www.americanarachnology.org)

Ken Prestwich has developed our website where one may find membership information, **Annual Meeting Info & registration**, announcements & Bulletin Board, officers, meeting minutes, instructions to JOA authors, an electronic JOA index, graduate study opportunities, a photo gallery, links to other arachnological sites, and **JOA OnLine** (electronic versions of the Journal of Arachnology; available to A.A.S. Members). Many, many thanks and kudos to Ken for applying his time and skill to the Website!! Thanks too to Holy Cross for sponsoring the site.

ARACHNOLOGY IN CYBERSPACE

International Society of Arachnology

[HTTP://WWW.ARACHNOLOGY.ORG](http://www.arachnology.org)

JOURNAL OF ARACHNOLOGY ELECTRONIC INDEX

The electronic index for the Journal of Arachnology is available at: <http://vassun.vassar.edu/~celt/suter/spiderform.html>

Note that the main search keywords are: SCORPION, SPIDER, HARVESTMAN, MITE. Any word or taxon that is in a title may be found with a search of the Index. Thanks to Bob Suter: SUTER@VASSAR.EDU [HTTP://FACULTY.VASSAR.EDU/~SUTER/SUTER.HTML](http://FACULTY.VASSAR.EDU/~SUTER/SUTER.HTML)

AMERICAN ARACHNOLOGY

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American Arachnological Society



**2005 Annual Meeting
The University of Akron**