

AAS Executive Committee Meeting Agenda and Notes 2025*

***Please refer to ACTION ITEMS on p. 6**

Present: Linda Rayor, Ryan Jones, Alex Berry, Nina Sandlin, Jason Bond, Sarah Stellwagen, Andy Roberts, Marc Milne. Present via Zoom Deb Smith, Al Cady.

Motion to accept EC from 2024: Motion to approve made by Alex Berry; seconded by Andy Roberts; all approved

Reports (appended):

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1. President report: | Linda Rayor |
| 2. Treasurer report: | Nina Sandlin |
| 3. Journal of Arachnology: | Deb Smith |
| 4. Webmaster report: | Nina Sandlin |
| 5. Membership report: | Alex Berry |
| 6. Secretary report: | Paula Cushing |
| 7. Graduate Student report: | Ryan Jones |
| 8. Director report: | Sarah Stellwagen & Marc Milne |
| 9. Student Research Grants: | Matt Graham |
| 10. Norm Platnick Award: | Mark Harvey |
| 11. Herb Levi Memorial Fund: | Sean Walker |
| 12. DEI committee: | Mercedes Burns |
| 13. Common Names Committee: | Sarah Rose |
| 14. English Review (ELRAW): | Shahan Derkarabetian |
| 15. Engagement & Outreach: | Eileen Hebets & Jillian Kurovski-Legris |
| 16. Arachno-Answers: | Jerry Rovner |
| 17. Archives: | Lenny Vincent |

Old Business:

- Membership and fund-raising drive starting Fall 2024
- Development Committee
- Changes to JoA Editorial Board

New Business (likely to be expanded):

- Future of the DEI committee
- Develop a grievance procedure
- Active rotation of committee structure for award committees
- Meeting venues and venue for 2026 and beyond
- Future of the Outreach Committee and activities

Notes from 2025 Executive Committee Meeting:

Linda: having interim EC meetings throughout the year was helpful and essential. Website has been greatly improved, much more welcoming. Linda considered that a good, positive change. Nina Sandlin took over when Daniel Gloor stepped down as webmaster. Nina pointed out that there is so much

overlap between treasurer function and webmaster function that it made sense for her to take over the webmaster role as well.

Andy: It might be worthwhile to recruit someone to serve as a back-up webmaster.

Nina: we need a back-up for everything.

Jason: on all accts, like new Credit Card, the President is on the account. Nina said there are still accounts that Cara Shillington and Karen Cangialosi are on. Nina wants to go through and clean these instances up.

Linda: brought up STRIPE for membership. STRIPE has taken a lot of time and a lot of money.

When Linda started, she hoped to increase membership, increase donor support. She has established more consistency about letters that go out to new members and thank you letters to donors.

Alex: when we move to STRIPE for membership, everything regarding membership and membership renewals will be automatic.

Linda: Jason, Nina and Linda have developed letter to donors. New logo developed by Sarah Stellwagen is gorgeous.

Linda spent a lot of time to find someone to take over from Brent Hendrixson to take over for the Student Research grant committee. Linda sent requests to many people and was surprised how few even responded. We need more people who are willing to step up to carry out service for the society.

Deb: JoA report. Beginning with 2025 volume, going to Print On Demand (POD) should be a large financial savings. It is still available via JStor, BioOne and the AAS website. Print copies will still be available via the POD additional charge. POD should pay for shipping costs. Expenses last year were reported differently between Allen Press and our current publisher, Sheridan, making it difficult to do side-by-side comparisons. She can say that we are in the black this year. Our income is about \$49,000 (check report) and expenses around \$29,000. Our net was about \$20+. And that was while we were still doing printing. So in 2025, when we stop printing, we should be in even better shape. Our Impact Factor is still about 1.0. See report for the rest. Publication process is slowed due largely to problems with format or other minor problems with the manuscript. Associate editors are or have developed a checklist for reviewers to use to make sure these issues won't slow down the process.

Paula asked how Rick Vetter is doing as managing editor. Rick Vetter does not want to accept any help. Deb seems to be doing things with manuscript formatting that should not be the job of the Editor-in-Chief.

Paula suggested that the EC help the Journal editors define what the role of the Editor-in-Chief, the Managing Editor, Associate Editors, and Editorial Board members. Some of these critical roles need back-ups.

Nina Sandlin treasurer report: we came out in the black by a handful of dollars in 2024. Donations were up but that was largely because one member donated \$5000 in 2023 and \$7000 in 2024 and the 2023 donation came in so late it was captured in 2024. We need to keep in mind that the structure of our finances is changing: the JoA changes; STRIPE-related changes for membership; meeting costs if we continue to use a meeting planner (like CopperCreekPartners). By us hiring a meeting planner, it is on

us (the AAS) to ensure that meeting costs break even or make money if we standardize processes and continue to use a meeting planning company. Once we get past the meeting financial results and POD financial results and have a chance to review and adjust, we will have a better idea about financial planning.

STRIPE: we are still in the testing phase for STRIPE. Once it is launched, that should help enormously. STRIPE change is only for membership.

See Treasurer report for other information including the pass-through money that goes thru PayPal that we should find a way to make interest on. Nina has not had a chance to explore these options but will be doing so and reporting back.

Alex Berry: Donations are up but depends on when you count the big donation. See report regarding # of sponsored members – many have no end-date. These were supposed to be for a year.

Linda suggested writing these continual sponsored members a letter.

Andy pointed out that he worked with Brian Patrick to avoid having to go back to these requesters every year. Andy pointed out that the sponsors just need to be poked or reminded to send money for their sponsored member every year. Alex and Andy can draft such a reminder letter.

Linda: Stripe will make things smoother for renewal.

Alex agreed: Stripe will even help members create their profiles – will be part of the process of renewing membership.

Alex: With STRIPE may be able to set it up as an “annual donation” for the sponsors to renew their paid sponsored membership(s).

Nina: will have to look into this.

Nina: Website report. Made changes to the # of pages to make website easier to understand what to do. This process started with Daniel Gloor in 2024. One major thing regarding the website is the STRIPE project. This has evolved over time. The way it initially was promoted was a non-starter. New member complaint was the lag between joining and hearing about membership because it is entirely up to Alex at the present (and that is dependent on how busy he is). Now webmaster can do that. STRIPE contract will cost money. There was an idea that we would build the same system for AAS and ISA. ISA has no membership function at all. Nina may be able to fix this for them. The connection with PayPal is just not working via the ISA website. Nina will work with Greta to help solve ISA’s disconnection that is preventing them from renewing or even paying memberships.

Paula presented overview of submitted Secretary report covering AA, PRs (and success), and SNAIM.

Nina: re POD of JoA has been implemented. A few people have bought the subscription to POD. For lifetime members, there are 6 who have signed up for the LtM gratis print copy and 6 LtMs who said they are happy just going digital. We are subsidizing the POD requests a little (not a lot). Meanwhile Nina is going to track down Institutional subscribers and convert them to promote institutional subscribers. About ½ of the institutional members pay through EBSCO.

Ryan: Discord service has over 100 students. Students need and want a continuation of the DEI committee and DEI work. Never got a survey out to students. Jason suggested just asking students what they want from the society over Discord and maybe start a conversation. EC agreed this would be worthwhile way to get suggestions and get a conversation started. Ryan will need to step off the committee. Jason will have to find a new grad student rep (maybe Jillian or Sarah Stellwagen's student) or get recommendations from Ryan.

Andy said we submit a call to society and ask a letter of interest and CVs and those are reviewed by elected members of the EC to choose a new student representative.

Sarah: Currently senior director. Will be rotating off in Sept. Marc Milne will take over. Asked Tyler Brown (postdoc) to be on Travel Grant committee. Had more \$ for travel grants and were able to fund 10. Some who did not get funded were internationals who were requesting huge amounts (\$3K). Often have applications requesting more than what we say we will fund. Nina suggested changing form to add clear language indicating the maximum amount that would be funded. Marc will re-visit and revise the form.

Matt Graham: see submitted student report. Al Cady was on the student research committee and said that Matt did a great job leading that committee and that process.

Linda (re Mark Harvey) Platnick Award Committee: A group of several people requested that the 6 year time period after graduation requirement be changed to accommodate those candidates who might have life challenges get in the way of career advancement. This request was put forth to the Platnick Committee and they made that change. There was also a concern about the lack of women winners but the male/female distribution of applications exactly matches the number of male/female taxonomists.

Mercedes stepped off as chair of the DEI committee (served for 5+ years and does not have time to continue). The charge in our constitution does not match the charge for this committee when the EC first created this committee. This is problematic. We need to change what is in the constitution to better reflect the charge from the EC. Andy will find the wording that the EC agreed upon and will send that to Paula. This change to constitution's wording may need to be approved by membership on next year's ballot.

Linda suggested that we ask current members of the DEI committee and see if any of the current members are willing to become the chair of the committee or can suggest a chair. Andy suggested that Linda reach out to current DEI committee members and see if any of them can serve as chair or can suggest a new chair.

Sarah suggested that Linda send a msg thanking Mercedes for her service on the DEI committee and that we understand she contributed money for prizes and that the EC would like to reimburse her for this investment in the committee.

Linda: The EC needs to develop a grievance procedure. Marc asked whether we got information from Eileen Hebets (from the Behavior Society) regarding their grievance procedure. Jason suggested that we ask Eileen if she would be willing to help us draft a grievance procedure. Jason will work with Eileen to do this.

Linda: Rotating committee membership. If a committee is made up of the same 5 people for too long, an existing bias may affect who is chosen for an award. Linda has been in communication with Mark Harvey on the Platnick committee about rotating committee membership on some time frame and he was open to perhaps inviting past winners to serve on the committee. She will follow up.

Linda will send out msgs to committee chairs encouraging all of the committee chairs to consider rotating committee membership.

Al Cady pointed out that there is something to be said for consistency on grants. Everyone does have a point of view but a good mix leads to a good consensus.

Jason pointed out that a committee can also be consistently biased.

Linda said that we were not recommending changing an entire committee. We are suggesting considering rotating and mixing members to bring in new viewpoint.

Outreach and Engagement committee: Linda pointed out that there has not been a lot of guidance or movement on this committee. Linda talked to Eileen about this and Eileen decided to step down. Linda would like to take over this committee. Linda would like to have talks a couple of times a year that are publicly accessible (maybe posted on YouTube). Would really like to promote our field to a general audience and to enthusiasts.

EC agreed to let Linda take over the chair of this committee.

Marc suggested making sure that someone who is tech-savvy also serve on this committee.

Linda was going to talk to Peter Midford because he works on our YouTube channel. She doesn't want to start a science festival before every meeting. But, rather, a few public talks.

Alex pointed out that before Covid we had first-time attendee events before the meetings and they were really well received. Keeping the student gathering early in a meeting is good. But we should also have a gathering for anyone who has never been to a meeting before.

We could also have a public event as part of the annual meeting.

Linda pointed out that this is something the newly emerged Outreach committee can work on.

Linda asked about the schedule of future meeting sites. Future meeting sites through 2030 are all posted on the AAS website.

Jason reported for Shahan's report on ELRAW: Shahan did very few reviews for anyone. He would like to open up his service to any arachnologists submitting to any journal, not just JoA.

Marc suggested promoting the service to students since many of them will be working on their first publication.

Ryan will follow up on Marc's suggestion and Shahan will expand the service beyond manuscripts submitted to JoA.

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ACTION ITEMS:

Linda Rayer (Deadlines for all but assumption of Outreach Committee activities by end of 2025):

- Reach out to current DEI committee members and see if any of them can serve as chair to replace Mercedes Burns or can suggest a new chair.
- Send a msg thanking Mercedes for her service on the DEI committee and recognize the monetary contributions Mercedes provided for prizes and indicate that the AAS can reimburse her for this investment.
- Send out msgs to committee chairs encouraging all of the committee chairs to consider rotating committee membership.
- Take over the Outreach & Engagement Committee and talk to Peter Midford about social media opportunities.
- Potentially plan public event as part of the next annual meeting in collaboration with meeting host (Eileen Hebets).

Nina Sandlin (Deadlines for each TBD):

- Go through all AAS-related bank accounts, including new Credit Card account to remove former treasurers' names and include consistent set of contacts.
- Determine if STRIPE may provide mechanism for membership sponsors to get automated reminder to renew their paid sponsored membership(s).
- Work with Greta Binford (ISA Treasurer) to help solve ISA's disconnection that is preventing them from renewing or even paying memberships, likely via STRIPE.
- Track down Institutional subscribers. About ½ of the institutional members pay through EBSCO.

Deb Smith with Jason Bond (deadline by Jan 1, 2026):

- Define what the role of the Editor-in-Chief, the Managing Editor, Associate Editors, and Editorial Board members. Some of these critical roles need back-ups.
- Find a way to reduce unnecessary work load and tasks done by Editor-in-Chief.

Alex Berry & Andy Roberts (deadline before Jan 1, 2026):

- Alex and Andy can draft such a reminder letter for membership sponsors to renew their sponsored membership(s).

Andy Roberts (deadline by end of the year):

- DEI goal as stated in constitution ("Charged with establishing mechanisms for supporting and recruiting BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) scientists interested in a career in arachnology") does not reflect the original charge from the EC. Andy will find the wording that the EC agreed upon and will send that to Paula and will determine if this will need to be included in next year's ballot as a constitutional change.

Jason Bond (deadline by Jan 1, 2026):

- Send call out to membership to recruit new grad student representative to replace Ryan Jones (who will have to step off after graduation).

- Work with Eileen Hebets to draft a grievance procedure that can be incorporated into the AAS Code of Conduct.
- Contact Shahan D. to let him know that the EC supports expanding the services of ELRAW beyond articles submitted to JoA. Have Shahan revise wording for this service found at <https://www.americanarachnology.org/journal-joa/elraw/>.

Ryan Jones (deadline by September 1, 2025):

- Send msg to students indicating that ELRAW exists and will help review their manuscript prior to submission (<https://www.americanarachnology.org/journal-joa/elraw/>).
- Ask students what they want from the society over Discord and maybe start a conversation. Report back to EC.

Marc Milne (by April 1, 2026):

- Revise student travel grant application to indicate maximum amount of funding students may request.

AAS President's Report 2025 – Linda S. Rayor

Activities in 2025

As President, I was involved in many discussions and decisions about all aspects of the function of the Society. Many of these were initiatives by other people, but I had input or made decisions about different issues.

EC Discussions:

- 1) I instituted regular Fall and Spring semester meetings, plus additional discussions with some members of the Executive Committee and Committee Heads during the year. The meetings serve to move major projects forward and come to a consensus about more controversial issues. The regular meetings were extremely productive and future AAS Presidents should continue the practice.

Website:

- 2) Nina Sandlin and I reworked the content, flow, and appearance of the AAS website. The site is much more welcoming, user-friendly and much more appealing. We have tried to clearly state why being an AAS member is valuable and emphasize community aspects of participating in the society. The site incorporates the stunning new logo designed by Sara Stellwagen. See a good example of overall changes at:
<https://www.americanarachnology.org/society/membership/>
- 3) Daniel Gloor resigned as the AAS Webmaster as he was overcommitted and frustrated with the slow progress of STRIPE*. Daniel was extremely helpful and deserves our thanks. Daniel was generous with his time and continued to provide input to Nina in the transition.
- 4) To our everlasting benefit, Nina Sandlin took over as AAS Webmaster in Fall 2024 and 2025 and has done a spectacular job and has made many internal and external changes which make life easier for everyone. All links in the website lead to content and are organized. She has taken the lead in negotiating with PSBrands (Agency for Brand Marketing in Germany) to make STRIPE* functional for the society.
- 5) STRIPE*. During Greta Binford and Andy Roberts tenures as President, AAS and ISA jointly agreed to hire a Germany IT company, PSBrands, for 'STRIPE' which would maintain and upgrade the function of the website(s) and develop a good membership program which would handle annual membership renewals and new members. While the website operations have worked relatively smoothly, the STRIPE membership program has been difficult to launch. STRIPE's membership program was supposed to be tested and be usable by Spring 2024, then ready for the membership drive in Winter 2024.

Now in June 2025, we appear to be near the end of the process, and we have agreement about exactly how the new and continuing registrations will work. The final product will greatly reduce the effort that the Membership Secretary needs to put in to get all of the member information, as well as automating membership renewals. Signing up as a new member will be much clearer. But it has taken a great deal of effort, oversight, and money to get to this point.

Membership and Donations:

- 6) My personal goal coming into AAS leadership was to significantly increase AAS membership and donations. While membership has remained constant, we moved forward in several areas that will eventually pay off.
- 7) We have significantly revised the informational letters that members receive when as incoming new members or renew their AAS membership. The information is clear and welcoming. (Nina Sandlin, Alex Berry, Linda Rayor)
- 8) A strong solicitation letter highlighting the scientific and community benefits of being a member and donating to AAS was developed to be sent to new lifetime members and in appreciation for donations. (Jason Bond, Nina Sandlin, Andy Roberts and I). The EC goal was to send personalized letters to all lifetime members by several members of the EC development committee, but we have not gotten very far in that effort.
- 9) I am sending thank you letters for all donations over \$50 and new lifetime members but I'm having trouble keeping up with it.
- 10) Sarah Stellwagen developed a striking new logo which was shared in letterhead, messaging and stickers.

Diversity, Demographics and Disasters:

- 11) Andy Roberts and Mercedes Burns developed a demographic survey designed to evaluate the interests and diversity of AAS and ISA members. The survey was distributed in late Summer 2024. Andy will talk to society about it.
- 12) In response to the attacks on science and DEI by the current administration, AAS distributed a statement to AAS members expressing pride in our diversity and membership initiated by Mercedes and Marc Milne.
- 13) AAS signed onto two letters by Union of Concerned Scientists and the AIBS emphasizing the value of science and the number scientific societies decrying the attacks on science. Letters attached.

Journal of Arachnology:

- 14) Last year, the EC made the decision to change the JOA to an electronic journal only in recognition changing times and to save the society a small fortune involved in printing the journal for a relatively small number of members. Much effort, primarily by Nina Sandlin and Deb Smith, has gone into negotiating a reasonable cost for a print-on-demand (POD) journal which could be subscribed for and sent automatically. The POD was offered for one year free of charge to lifetime members who preferred the printed copy, in recognition of their investment in the society. Free POD may be offered for more years, depending on the annual financial hit to the society. Messages about the POD option have been sent widely to the membership.

Committees:

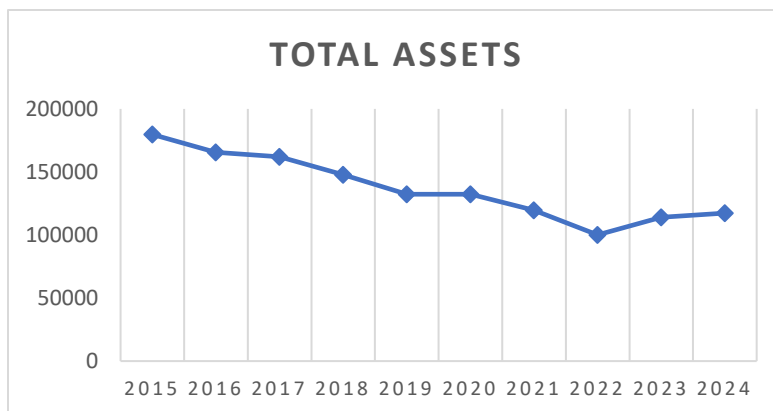
- 1) The Student Research Grants Committee needed a new Chair and additional judges on the committee. Ultimately, Matt Graham took over for Brent Hendrixson as Chair, and Shahan Derkarabetian and Siddharth Kulkarni as judges. While all of these fine individuals stepped up immediately when I contacted them, I was surprised by the number of prominent members of the society who did not respond to my queries at all. As for all service positions within the society, it would be nice to have a deeper bench of willing volunteers.

2025 AAS Treasurer Report
Submitted by Nina Sandlin

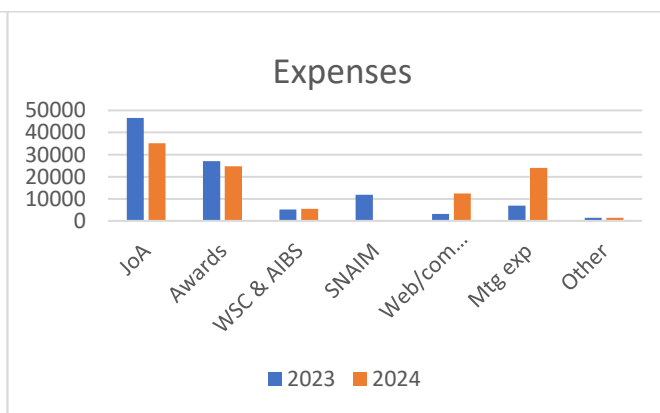
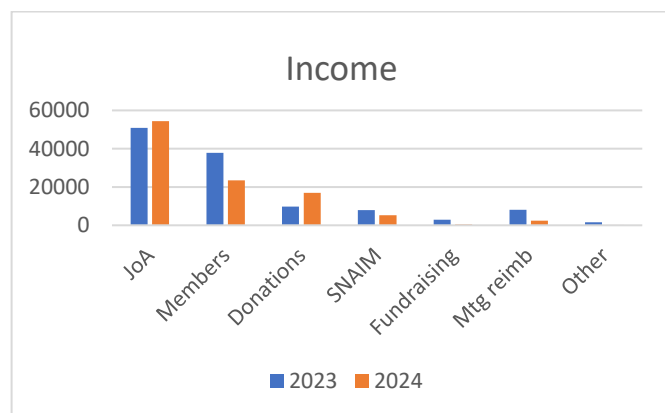
Review of 2024 and a Look Ahead

Our cash on hand and total assets at the close of 2024 were slightly above 2023 levels, in both cases largely due to continued growth of the SNAIM balance, which has no expenses and cannot be tapped for day-to-day operations.

	2023	2024
Mains	45,388	34,105
SNAIM	8,120	12,831
Cash on hand	45,489	46,936
Schwab	68,451	70,386
Total assets	113,940	117,322



Donations were up (largely due to a single substantial donor) but membership was down by 40%, while two categories of expenses – web/communications and meeting expenses – rose substantially. The shrinking margin is driven by changes to our cash-flow profile that we need to stay on top of.



INCOME	2023	2024
JoA - Royalties	50,638	51,760
JoA - Author charges	235	2,710
Membership	37,826	23,398
Donations	9,696	16,945
SNAIM - Baker & Taylor	5,606	4,708
SNAIM - Sales	2,250	550
Fundraising	2,978	483
Meeting reimbursement	8,062	2,400
Other (misc, interest)	1,646	68
	118,937	103,022

EXPENSES	2023	2024
JoA - Composition etc.	10,143	17,256
JoA - Production etc.	30,442	10,898
JoA - Editors	6,000	7,010
Awards	26,964	24,790
WSC & AIBS	5,230	5,505
SNAIM - new edition	11,891	0
Website - maintenance	852	9,398
Website - webmaster	1,000	1,000
Website - hosting, domain	673	1,686 ¹
Social/email outreach	662	276
Meeting expenses	6,900	23,951
Other	1,466	1,396
	102,060	103,166

¹ Hosting, paid triennially, comes to about \$520/year

The structure of our financial profile is changing, and we need to stay aware of the elements driving that.

JoA. The regular print edition was discontinued starting with 2025 (vol 53), eliminating that element of JoA costs. (The last issue of 2024 did not ship until this spring, making that \$6,118 print charge a 2025 expense.) We are now offering members a print subscription via the faster and somewhat less expensive "print on demand" technology, which is all automated. These subscriptions, which are separate from membership dues, are \$90/year – the top price that our survey found would be acceptable to members. This represents a slight subsidy (about \$11/year per subscriber). In addition, the EC voted to give first-year subscriptions free to lifetime members who had been getting hardcopy. That will be a roughly \$3,130 expense, so figure about \$3,400 in first-year costs associated with the POD offering. POD also represents an opportunity to promote and boost our institutional subscribers, who are covering their costs.

Meeting expenses. Engaging a meeting planner was seen as essential in securing host commitments for upcoming meetings, and it probably is. The ability to post planned meeting locations years in advance, and to offer a consistent registration experience, can help encourage participation. This changes the structure of our finances: Meeting expenses, which used to be handled almost entirely by the host institution, have shifted to the society's budget. While meeting proceeds were always supposed to cover costs, it will now be the society's responsibility to make sure this happens. The meeting planner contract is capped at \$23,400/12 months.

Costs for the 2025 meeting are presumably higher than can be expected in coming years, as the Colorado School of Mines – the Denver-area meeting site – is an expensive venue.

Efforts to secure donations specifically to support the meeting brought in \$13,400, mirroring a similar campaign by Linda Rayer for the 2023 meeting. As Colleen Carter, our meeting planner, suggests, this should be a regular feature of meeting operation.

Auction proceeds in 2024 were nominal (under \$500, compared with ~\$3,000 historically), highlighting the need to promote both item donations and the auction itself to help bolster meeting revenue.

Website costs. Maintenance charges in 2024 were more than an order of magnitude higher than in 2023, due to system upgrades, as noted as upcoming in the previous webmaster's report. The long-delayed move of membership payments from PayPal to Stripe has been restructured to avoid locking into the place labor-intensive manual aspect of the current process (see details in the new webmaster report). This will also be costly. I expect 2025 to be another \$10,000 website year.

Investments. With the change to meeting proceeds coming directly into AAS accounts, we are carrying at times in excess of \$90,000 in our PayPal account as memberships and meeting fees come in. This is pass-through money that will shortly be paid out again for expenses. However, it has been suggested that we might be able earning to earn interest on it. I will investigate and report back.

Briefly Noted

- **IRS penalty** paid in April (for 2022 tax filings being sent on paper) was quickly refunded.
- Our new **AAS Visa card** is already useful in reserving activities and venues for the annual meeting.
- We signed up for the bottom-tier account at **CognitoForms.com** (\$11/month), a forms-building platform that we're using for meeting registration, POD subscriptions, JoA author charges, etc.
- I suggest we that, once meeting and POD subscription results are in, we create a **tentative budget** for the coming year and approve it at the fall EC zoom, with action steps if needed.

Quarterly and annual financial reports are available on request.

Journal of Arachnology – Annual report for 2024

1. Beginning with issue 53, JoA will be online only. This is a major financial savings for JoA. Prior to volume 53, nearly 2/3 of our costs went to cover paper, printing and mailing. Our publication will be available through BioOne, JStore and the AAS website.

Print copies will continue to be available through print on demand (POD). This will be available for a separate fee which should cover the printing and mailing costs. Life-time members will receive print copies of the journal---if they request them---*gratis*, for the first year. We will then evaluate the impact on journal finances to determine how to proceed.

2. Finances. As I noted last year in the 2024/2023 report, expenses are reported differently by our publishers, Sheridan/KGL than they were by Allen Press. While it this makes it tricky to make direct comparison of costs from Allen press years and Sheridan/KGL years, this year I can report that our expenses for the year are solidly in the **black**.

Currently, our 2024 **income** from Royalties (BioOne, Cengage and JStore) is **\$49,591**. Final income will be a bit higher as we have not received two sources of income: BioOne net surplus share, typically \$5,000 to \$7,000, and Cengage's fall payment, ~\$40.

Our **expenses** for Volume 52 were \$29,353. (This does not include annual honoraria for the editing team.) Cost per published page was \$107.92. These expenses include (a) fees for use of the PeerTrack online software, (b) storage of print copies, supplying copies on request, (c) composition (preparing page proofs and online products,), and (d) printing, binding and mailing. Last year, printing, binding and mailing were approximately 58% of our total costs. Thus, I expect we will be in even better financial condition at the end of Volume 53.

Our net income was \$20,237.

Extreme summary:

Volume	2022 Vol.50	2023 Vol.51	2024 Vol.52
Income	\$50,539.66	51,759.86	\$49,590.73
Expenditures :	\$52,297.82	40,958.95	\$29,353.34
Shortfall or gain:	(\$1,758.16)	10,800.91	\$20,237.39

2. JoA on the American Arachnological Society website. Our Treasurer and Webmaster, Nina Sandlin, has set up systems for online calculation and payment of page charges, open access fees, and print on demand. Some sources of confusion over the manuscript submission requirements have been cleared up. **A task for the near future** is to communicate with PeerTrack to ensure that instructions to authors posted on PeerTrack match those on the AAS website.

3. Our BioOne impact factor is still 1.

4. Statistics about the journal itself.

Contents-Volume 52 was our smallest in recent years, at 272 pages (not including instructions to authors). We published 28 items, including 3 reviews, 18 feature articles, 5 short communications and 2 errata. For comparison, Volume 51 was 372 pages, including 3 reviews, 15 feature articles, and 9 short communications.

Manuscript submissions are down- In 2024, 41 manuscripts were submitted. This compares with 34 in 2023, 64 in 2022, 79 in 2021, and 96 in 2020. Although we received more submissions in 2024 than in 2023, we are seeing a gradual decline in submissions.

A probable cause of this decline is our long lag time between provisional acceptance and publication.-Last year I noted that we should consider ways to move some of the tasks that now fall on editors back to the authors. Many manuscripts are provisionally accepted and sent to Rick Vetter and me for final preparation without proper figure and table files, or with other problems that require correction and communication with the authors. All of this takes time and slows down moving manuscripts to publication.

I have discussed this with the subject editors. The main changes we will implement are: (1) providing reviewers a list of items that should be checked as part of the review process. These are common sense items such as, “Are all the figures and tables mentioned in the text actually present? Do figure legends match the figures?” (2) a checklist for subject editors that includes making sure the figures are submitted in appropriate file formats (tif, jpg, png, pdf files or even PowerPoint slides), at appropriate resolutions (300 ppi or higher), and with multi-image plates assembled into a single file (all requirements spelled out in the Instructions for Authors). Figures and graphs should be checked for spelling mistakes or other obvious errors. (3) Manuscripts that don’t meet these requirements should be sent back to the authors for correction. If authors correct their own errors before they receive a provisional acceptance letter, the lag-time between provisional acceptance and publication will become **much shorter**.

Respectfully,
Deborah Smith,
Editor-in-Chief, Journal of Arachnology

2025 AAS Webmaster Report

Submitted by Nina Sandlin

Some Evolution of Operations

As well as being the public face of the Society, the AAS website is the starting point for many of our financial operations – membership, donations, grants and awards, meeting registrations and now the new POD journal subscriptions – the bulk of which are digital. So, while adding the webmaster role to that of treasure was unexpected, it proved useful in terms of seeing how the processes worked across platforms, and being in a position to try to possibly make them work better.

Usability and Navigation

In 2024, as treasurer, I worked with Linda and Daniel to update the Membership and JoA pages and, in the process, to make them clearer and more compelling. With member rates changing and the journal soon moving to online-only, it was an opportune time to freshen up those pages. We also updated the Meeting and Donate pages to simplify and strengthen the message. The idea was to streamline the text while giving people more of an idea of *why* they might want to attend the meeting or make a donation. In the process, we made sure that links were up to date and that related sections linked to each other (for example, having the student travel grant info linked from the Meetings page). In the same spirit, we worked with the Development Committee to craft new messages for membership and donation outreach.

More recently, I added a section of key links at the top of the landing page that logging in takes you to. This had the side benefit of pushing the dated “member news” items down on the page (fig. 1); I hope to start having our fresher news appear there later this year. I also hope that, as part of the Stripe migration, some navigation can be made clearer (like changing the login link from “Member’s Area” to “Log In” and having your status not say “Logout” when you are logged in – fig. 2).

Stripe Migration

The plan to transfer AAS’ membership operation from PayPal as the “payfac” (payment facilitator) to Stripe originated several years ago, and has encountered extended delays. During that time, it has become clear that some aspects of the current membership process are labor-intensive and inefficient, and that the originally planned workflow under Stripe was going to lock into place those manual steps. In particular, putting account activation ahead of payment and requiring the membership secretary to manually approve each new member created a bottleneck, and a good deal of extra work. Having to wait for manual confirmation was also the No. 1 member complaint.

The current membership process is very roundabout. Alex uses four separate email accounts to do all his steps, and is not always able to secure payment or match up a profile with a transaction. This takes a toll on our member data, leading to many “phantoms” on the rolls. Last year, when there were 372 active members, the membership list had 768 rows due the numerous undefined accounts. We had 73 sponsored memberships in an ambiguous status (expired or not) and about 70 that had apparently never paid. There are also dupes and garbled names (like “Carina InÃ©s ArgÃ©araz” and “Hubert HÃ©lfer”). This data will need to be scrubbed for import into Stripe.

This year, we worked with PSBrands (the site maintainer/developer) to restructure the workflow, so that a new member will pay first, *then* be prompted with a one-time password to activate their account. For simplicity, these memberships will be recurring. Also, student and retired will be separate membership categories, to allow for appropriate messaging to each group.

These revisions will inevitably add costs to an already expensive project, since most of the sunk cost is not recoverable. The shift also takes us away from the model that ISA is using, and therefore requires a separate Typo3 “extension” (set of code). Nonetheless, we believe that the change in workflow was necessary to streamline AAS operations, reduce the burden on the AAS team, and provide a modern experience to members and prospective members.

Outage, Maintenance, and Testing

As some of you may know, we experienced an extended outage in April where for two weeks the “Current Issue” page returned an error for logged-in members. PSBrands eventually fixed it and concluded it resulted from an upgrade to the Typo3 system (upgrades are known sometimes break things); a similar outage occurred in early 2024. To prevent another recurrence, we told them that we need to know ahead of time exactly when a major upgrade will happen, and to be ready to follow up with our own testing of key operations – a closer partnership they actually welcomed. Early testing will help identify issues ahead of when a function becomes essential, like when a new issue goes live.

The Burden of Customer Service

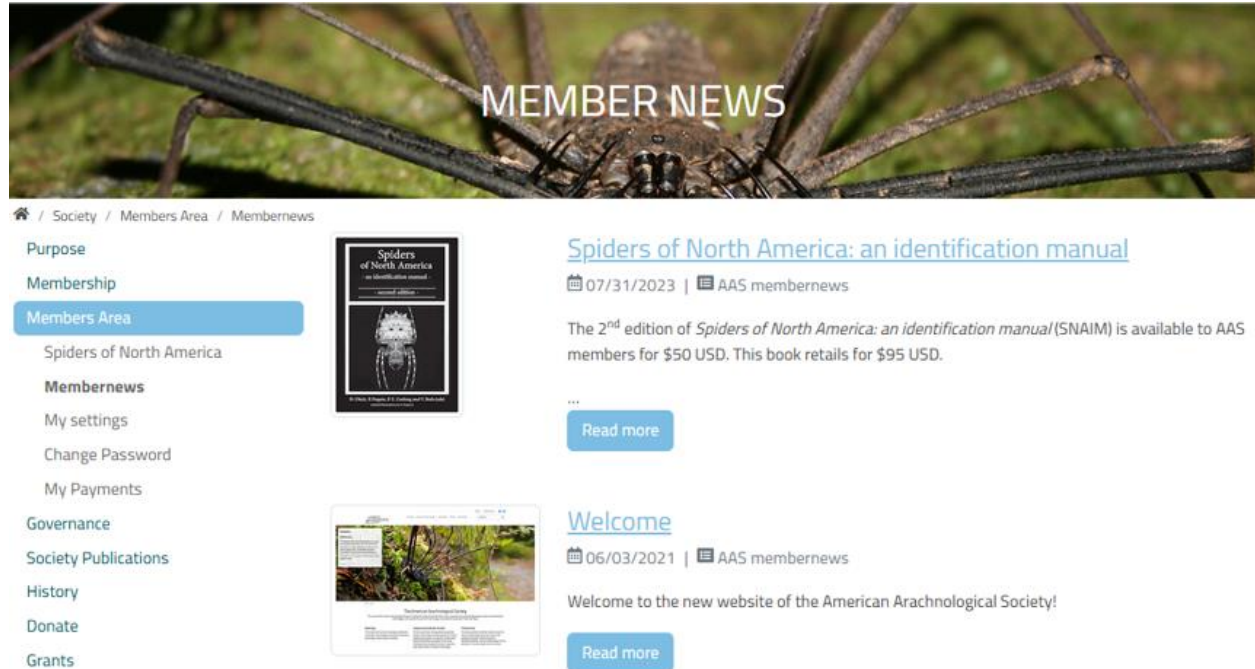
Making processes and recordkeeping a bit more automated will reduce the manual, ad hoc tasks and emails that the membership secretary, the meeting host, the journal editor (regarding author charges), and other AAS team members have to perform. Our Cognito Forms account generates sophisticated forms that use conditional logic to calculate costs and discounts (and to suggest covering fees and adding donations), which we can adapt and reuse year to year, cutting down what needs to be communicated by email. In addition, journal delivery moving to subscription-based, and institutional subscribers from paper checks to ACH, will also cut down on extra handling.

The Importance of Bothering Nina

When I get notes from members or fellow EC folks about some issue on the website (or with a payment, or a form) they often say “Sorry to bother you...” Well, don’t be sorry! There is nothing more valuable to someone charged with looking after a website than people taking time to report that something isn’t working, or is confusing, or simply could be better. It is a common thing for organizations not to look their own website very much (I see this with my paying nonprofit clients!), or to not tell anyone if they see something goofy if it isn’t critical (like the search results page that had German text in the banner – fig. 3 – which it’s really possible no one ever noticed). So please, do tool around our website when you have a moment, and do let me know what you find.

Figure 1. Member login landing page

PREVIOUSLY:



CURRENTLY:

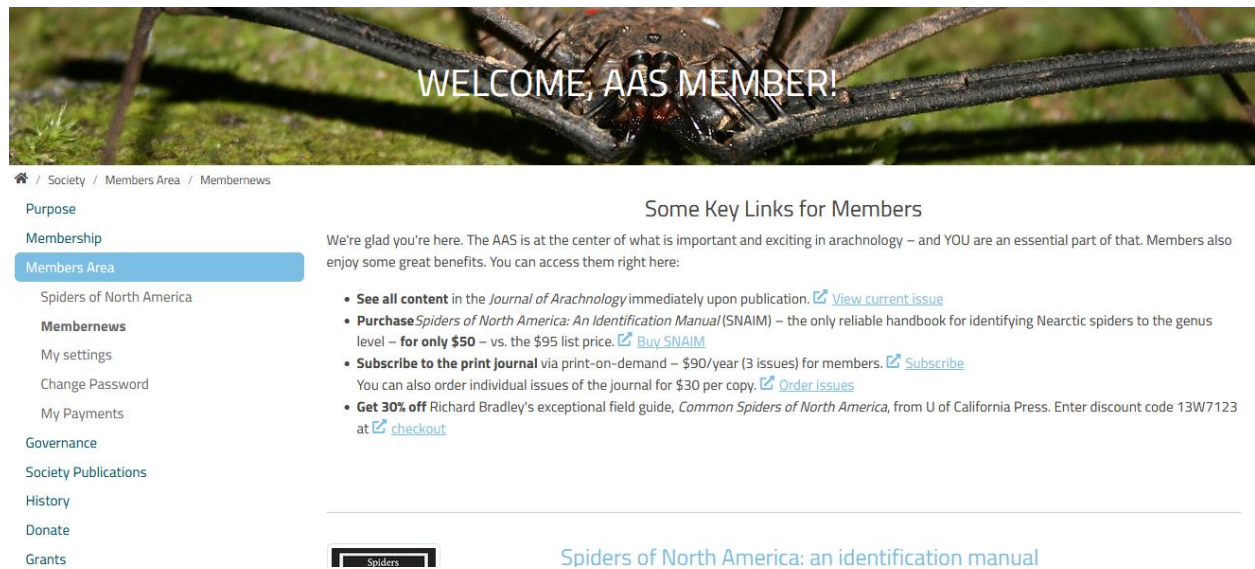


Figure 2. Confusing “current status” of logged-in members

Current status

This is your current status

Logout

Username nsandlin

Logout

Figure 3. Search results page circa 2023



Membership secretary's report – Alex Berry

1. Website updates mean a new payment method and workflow for members.
2. Membership numbers are down across the board
 - a. 60 lifetime members,
 - b. 80 current or former sponsored members (20 paid through this year)
 - i. Many set up before me and had no end date.
 - c. 306 regular members
 - i. 135 paid through 2025 (44%)
 - ii. 51 paid through 2024 (17%)
 - iii. 120 have not paid since 2023 or earlier (39%)
 - iv. Similar to last year
 - d. 290 listed student/retired
 - i. 107 paid through 2025 (37%)
 - ii. 50 paid through 2024 (17%)
 - iii. 132 otherwise (45%)
 - e. I am less concerned about student numbers, as students will come and go and are inherently a more transient group
 - f. There is also a small group of inactive accounts
 - i. Registered but never paid
 - ii. New workflow should help this
 - iii. Also this group includes some admin and test accounts.
3. Donations are roughly the same as last year

2025 AAS Secretary, JoA PR, and SNAIM Report

Submitted by Paula Cushing

Secretary Report: I continue to send out two issues of *American Arachnology* (AAS's newsletter) each year: one issue is distributed and posted in April and the other in October of each year. I have been trying to include interviews with senior arachnologists (when possible), obituaries, announcements, and reports of recipients of student and non-student research grants and awards. I also include short natural history articles from colleagues. I continue to welcome contributions. I am trying to establish *American Arachnology* as a repository for society news and updates.

JoA PR Report: I was lax in submitting Press releases about JoA articles until the last issue published in 2025. In April 2025, I submitted a Press Release "Scorpions Arm Wrestle for Love" highlighting the article by Jules Thornton Wyman, Yuri Simone and co-authors in Vol 52(3) of JoA. This PR was picked up by the Editor-in-Chief of *Natural History* magazine who plans to highlight the article as a cover photo and short article in an upcoming issue of *Natural History*!

In the upcoming year, I will once again try to coordinate better with the JoA Editor-in-Chief, Deb Smith, to identify upcoming articles worthy of a Press Release.

SNAIM Report: At the end of 2024, we had about 400 copies of the 2nd edition, 2nd printing of *Spiders of North America: an identification manual* in our inventory with Baker & Taylor. That printing house will continue to serve as our warehouse for this edition and future editions of SNAIM. However, it will no longer print any future editions of the manual. Instead, Ryan Seidner of the printing company, Bradford & Bigelow (Ryan used to work at Baker & Taylor) reached out and I worked with him regarding the possibility of this new printing house taking over for future editions of SNAIM. Bradford & Bigelow will work well for our purposes and will be able to produce a 3rd edition of SNAIM when we are ready. Bradford and Bigelow sent sample spiral-bound books that they have produced that are of equal, if not better quality than the spiral bound editions of SNAIM produced by Baker & Taylor.

We estimate that it will likely take 2-3 years to sell the remainders in our inventory of the 2nd edition, 2nd printing. I have been in communication with the co-editors/illustrator of SNAIM – Darrell Ubick, Pierre Paquin, and Nadine Duperre – and we are in the VERY early stages of thinking about the 3rd edition. The 3rd edition will include additional families and additional chapter / key authors. We are not close, currently, to planning the production of the 3rd edition. This process will likely start in earnest sometime in 2027 (maybe earlier). It will most certainly start earlier if our remaining inventory drops considerably due to increasing sales in the next year. When the 3rd edition is produced, we will also publish an e-version of the manual (as we did for the 2nd edition).

Student Representative Report

Discord: The discord server has only grown a net ~10 members since this time last year. Activity is mostly around conference time, with sporadic engagement around news or events. Jillian K-Legris and I shared messages of support in response to the actions of the current administration, and we received positive responses.

The DEI committee and the visibility of supporting messages: Some student members reported not seeing/receiving the supporting message the society sent out earlier this year and did not know of the society's position on DEI. These students reported being student members and having received other AAS communications since enrolling in membership. I'm unsure of the how/why this message didn't reach them, but this prompted students to express that they wish to see increased visibility of the message, like being posted on the AAS website.

In the same vein, I wish to convey the support of the student body for the continuation of Mercedes' DEI work. Regardless of whether there is a nominal committee or not, there is a desire for visible messaging and efforts in support of marginalized communities and DEI efforts. Student members are ready to contribute and provide support to whomever succeeds Mercedes.

A student survey? At last year's meeting I shared students' less-than-enthusiastic attitudes towards being a member for anything other than award opportunities and cheaper registration. In response to this, I proposed conducting a survey to try to more comprehensively understand student attitudes towards membership. Some EC members expressed some interest but it was tabled until I could follow up, which I never did. Though now perhaps the utility may be diminished in the current political climate, If this is something the EC thinks would be useful, I'll make it happen.

A new student representative: In anticipation of finishing my dissertation this fall, I plan to resign the role of student representative this year. I'm happy to serve up until a new representative has been chosen, but I think it's prudent to make an announcement at this meeting and determine how the next representative will be chosen.

I appreciate the opportunity to serve AAS, and I appreciate working with the EC to understand student experiences.

AAS Directors Report 2024-2025

Senior Director: Dr. Sarah Stellwagen

Junior Director: Dr. Marc Milne

The non-past-president directors are charged with leading the AAS Student Travel Grant awards selection, this year for travel to the meeting in Golden, Colorado 2025. The directors recruited Dr. Tyler Brown, a postdoc in Dr. Stellwagen's lab and former Ph.D. student of Dr. Mercedes Burns to be the 3rd member of the selection committee. Dr. Brown is a continuing and productive member of the AAS and was chosen to give him initial experience participating formally in society governance in preparation for larger roles in the future.

The travel grant committee was given a \$7000 budget, which was increased from \$3000 last year. There were 12 applications of which 10 were funded. 9 applications were from students from the USA, 1 from Brazil, and 2 were from further abroad. Many of the funded 10 were supported for their entire request, however despite verbiage in the application that says awards are up to \$800, several still requested above this amount. Two applications were from students from outside of North or South America. The committee expressed concerns over the ability of these students to get visas in time considering the current administration and neither of these students indicated that they had secured the remainder of the sizable funding amount it would take to travel to the US from their institutions.

Applicants and funding amount:

Aróstegui, Javier Blasco: New York City, NY, USA; \$800

Castanon, Nadia: Stephenville, TX, USA; \$550

Gibbons, Kris: Ypsilanti, MI, USA; \$800

Grossel, Laís: Sao Paulo, Brazil; \$800

Jones, Madeline: Portland OR, USA; \$800

Karkosiak, Katherine: Akron, OH, USA; \$800

Kerschner, Ali: Portland, OR, USA; \$250

Kioko, Grace: Nairobi, Kenya; Not Awarded

Kutti, Arjun: Kerala, India; Not Awarded

Lockett, Sage: Richmond, VA, USA; \$600

Mascarell, Arnau, Moscow, ID, USA; \$800

Poscente, Spencer, Ypsilanti, MI, USA; \$800

Dr. Stellwagen also secured volunteers for the next Director opening as Dr. Milne moves to Senior Director and Dr. Stellwagen rotates off, which were sent out as part of the AAS election ballot.

2025 Student Research Grants – Annual Report

American Arachnological Society

The American Arachnological Society has two funds to support research by student members of the society (undergraduate or graduate):

- The Arachnological Research Fund (ARF) provides awards of up to \$1,000 to support projects related to any aspect of the behavior, ecology, physiology, or evolution of any of the arachnid groups. The ARF subcommittee consists of Anita Aisenberg, Al Cady, and Jason Schmidt.
- The Vincent Roth Fund for Systematics Research (VRF) provides awards of up to \$1,000 to support projects focused on the taxonomy or systematics of any arachnid group. The VRF subcommittee consists of Dan Proud, Shahan Derkarabetian, and Siddharth Kulkarni.

Total number of submitted proposals:	30*
• Arachnological Research Fund (ARF) Proposals:	17 (56.6%)
• Vincent Roth Fund (VRF) Proposals:	13 (43.3%)

NOTES: * Two additional proposals were sent by non-students and rejected outright.

Demographics:

- Total number of applicants: 30*
- Applicants by educational level:
 - PhD: 13 (43.3%)
 - MS: 15 (50.0%)
 - Undergrad: 2 (6.6%)
- Institution of applicants:
 - United States: 13 (43.3%)
 - India: 7 (23.3%)
 - Other: 10 (33.3%)
 - Argentina (2)
 - Brazil (2)
 - Costa Rica (1)
 - Mexico (2)
 - Pakistan (1)
 - Sri Lanka (1)
 - Uruguay (1)

Total Student Research Fund Budget: \$15,000

- Budget is allocated annually based on relative proportion of total applicants in each fund (see above).
 - ARF: \$8,500
 - VRF: \$6,500
 - **NOTE:** 22 proposals were fully or partially funded (8 proposals were not funded).
- Total funding requested: \$28,317.83
 - ARF: \$15,847.83
 - VRF: \$12,470.00
- Total Awarded ($n = 13$), Arachnological Research Fund: **\$8,500.00**
 - **Steven Casey**, PhD student, University of Massachusetts, Lowell, USA. \$800. Molecular evolution of unique dragline silk in cribellate orb-weaving spiders and its connection to mechanical performance and web form
 - **Nadia Castanon**, MS student, Tarleton State University, USA. \$450. Investigating the Impact of Invasive Plants and Grazing Practices on Spider Communities in Texas Rangelands
 - **Irving David Chávez Lara**, MS student, Centro de Investigaciones Biológicas del Noroeste (CIBNOR) S.C.; B.C.S., México. \$500. Diversity and Abundance of Arachnids (ex Acari, Chelicerata: Arachnida) from the “El Novillo” Sierra, Baja California Sur, México
 - **AWARD DECLINED**
 - **Poulami De**, PhD student, University of Akron, USA. \$600. How Prey Flight Noise Regulates Spider Hunting Behavior: Probing the Role of Airborne Sound in Priming Prey Capture Responses
 - **Sage DeLong**, MS student, University of Illinois, Chicago, USA. \$750. The internal and external factors of the release of defensive chemical secretions in *Leiobunum* spp. Opiliones
 - **Erin Golladay**, MS student, University of South Alabama, USA. \$900. Gene Expression Dynamics of Venom Replenishment Across Time in Striped Bark Scorpions
 - **Ella Kelner**, MS student, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, USA. \$350. An analysis of the flexural strength of *Hypochilus pococki* cribellate silk threads
 - **Tyler Kulak**, MS student, University of Massachusetts Boston, USA. \$500. Biodiversity and Insecticide Sensitivity of Nantucket Bog Spiders
 - **Anngelyk La Luz Maldonado**, PhD student, University of Florida, USA. \$750. Using experimental and micro-CT approaches to assess parasite manipulation of spider behavior

- **Julieta Ledda**, PhD student, National University of Cordoba (UNC). Argentina. \$600. Biodiversity of arachnids in the Mendoza foothills: Effect of urbanization and human perception.
- **Jaclyn Mowry**, MS student, Western Michigan University, USA. \$500. Insect-Mediated Mercury Flux in the Kalamazoo River Area of Concern
- **Nikhil Kuni**, PhD student, MIT World Peace University, Pune, India. \$500. Spiders in Urban Web: Assessment of Correlates of Spider Diversity & Distribution in the Context of Changing Environment
- **Spencer Poscente**, MS student, Eastern Michigan University, USA. \$600. Love in the Fast Lane: Rapid Senescence at Sexual Maturity in Male Tarantulas (*Aphonopelma hentzi*)
- **Rebecca Robertson**, PhD student, University of Kentucky, USA. \$700. Spider Web eDNA as a Passive Surveillance Tool for Biodiversity and Invasive Species Monitoring
- Total Awarded ($n = 10$), Vincent Roth Fund: **\$6,500.00**
 - **Ian Ashton**, MS student, San Diego State University, USA. \$1,000. Testing a model of natural “reverse speciation” by evaluating hybrid zones in the *Habronattus americanus* species group (Araneae: Salticidae)
 - **Laura Caramori**, MS student, Museu Nacional do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), Brasil. \$700. Taxonomic review and phylogenetic analysis of *Heterocranaus* Roewer, 1913 (Opiliones: Cranida)
 - **Thakshila Herath**, MS student, National Institute of Fundamental Studies, Sri Lanka. \$450. Unravelling the Enigma of Phycids: Phylogenetic and Biogeographic Insights into Sri Lanka's Endemic Salticids
 - **Madeline Jones**, UG student, Lewis & Clark College, USA. \$950. Morphological Characteristics of Proposed New Species of *Trogloaraptor*
 - **María Emilia Tauber**, MS student, Universidad de la Republica, Uruguay. \$700. *Acanthoscurria* from Córdoba, Argentina, and Uruguay: one or more species?
 - **Aakash Kumar Pathak**, PhD student, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India. \$950. Population structure and barriers to gene flow in the widespread Indian social spider: Insights from the Western Ghats
 - **María Paula Pereira**, PhD student, Museo Argentino de Ciencias Naturales “Bernadino Rivadavia”, Argentina. \$1,000. Systematic revision of Kimulidae: Advancing Phylogenetic Understanding with Ultraconserved Elements
 - **Iván López Ramírez**, MS student, Centro de Investigaciones Biológicas del Noroeste SC. (CIBNOR), Mexico. \$750. Integrative taxonomy for species delimitation of the spider genus *Steatoda* Sundevall, and *Asagena* Sundevall (Araneae: Theridiidae) (fulva group) from Mexico, with morphological and molecular evidence.

Additional Notes

- This is my first year as chair. I want to thank the former chair, Brent Hendrixson, for passing down position details and extensive notes that made the transition easier.
- Shahan Derkarabetian and Siddharth Kulkarni are new members of the VRF subcommittee, which, along with Dan Proud, make the committee now complete. It was down one member last year.
- At the request of Linda Rayor and Paula Cushing, the Student Research Grants Committee will now email all grant awardees with a request to “pay it forward” by volunteering to work/help at the annual meetings. Emails should look something like the following:

As a recipient of an AAS student research grant, the AAS would like to encourage the 2025 recipients who plan to attend the upcoming annual meeting to volunteer on site at the meeting. If you are willing and able to “pay forward” by helping with meeting activities, please introduce yourself to the meeting host, Paula Cushing, or to any of the meeting volunteers (they will all have Volunteer buttons) and offer your assistance.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to student research in arachnology.

Respectfully,



Matthew R. Graham

Chair, AAS Student Research Grants Committee
Professor, Biology Department
Eastern Connecticut State University
grahamm@easternct.edu

The Norman Platnick Award for Taxonomic Research
Report by Panel Chair, Mark Harvey
9 June 2025

Applications for the 2025 Norman Platnick Award for Taxonomic Research opened in early 2025 and closed on 30 April 2025. Six applications were received (five men, one woman).

After receiving a submission from the Support Women in Arachnology group, the Panel sought advice from the Executive of the American Arachnological Society who noted that the award criteria were biased against people with non-traditional career paths.

The Panel and Executive agreed to alter the selection criteria and extend the closing date to 17 July 2025. See <https://www.americanarachnology.org/society/norman-platnick-award/#:~:text=The%20award%20honors%20the%20late%20Dr.%20Norman%20Platnick,of%20Dr.%20Platnick%E2%80%99s%20family%20in%20making%20this%20bequest.>

The Panel will meet after this date and select an awardee.

Herb Levi Memorial Fund/Grant

Sean Walker

This committee was delayed in making decisions about funding. They will report back to the EC when the committee re-convenes and makes their funding decisions.

AAS Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee report- 2025

Chair: Dr. Mercedes Burns

Members: Dr. Richard Bradley, Dr. Shahan Derkarabetian, Dr. Victoria Schmalhofer

Mission: The mission of the AAS DEI committee is to propose and carry out inclusive activities that support early-career, hobbyist, LGBTQ+, disabled, and underrepresented minority groups within the arachnological community.

Activities: During the fall of 2024, I collaborated with Past President Andy Roberts and his colleague Nathaniel Swigger to prepare a Qualtrics survey of the membership and non-member meeting attendees of AAS to understand the intersectional identities of membership and supportive programming. I contacted 23 survey respondents randomly selected by Andy Roberts to offer prize items for completing the survey, and arranged purchasing and shipping for 16 physical prizes totaling about \$475, including:

- 4 \$25 gift cards to The Vexed Muddler, an official vendor from the AAS 2020 online meeting
- 5 sets of dissection forceps
- 4 copies of Sarah Rose's Spiders of North America
- 2 T-shirts from the website of renowned arachnid photographer, Thomas Shahan
- 1 Copy of Norman Platnick's Spiders of the World

Although I had previously planned to finance the survey prizes with funds from my NSF CAREER grant, I was unable to get the administration of my institution to work with me on this, so I decided to treat the activity and funds as a charitable donation to the AAS.

Andy Roberts plans to present data from the demographic survey at the 2025 meeting in Golden, CO.

During the spring of 2025, I collaborated with AAS EC Director Marc Milne to provide a statement in support of underrepresented minority members of the AAS, in the wake of anti-DEI executive orders impacting grant funding efforts to study and improve equity within STEM.

Retrospective: I was nominated *ad-hoc* by Past President Greta Binford to develop the AAS DEI committee in 2020, and have overseen the following activities:

- 1) Initiate a demographic survey of the AAS to quantify membership identities and societal climate. This first took shape as part of a NSF BIO-LEAPS grant application in 2022, but was completed in 2024, as the grant was not funded.
- 2) Develop activities to strengthen belonging of members of the AAS, especially early career, non-professional, and marginalized researchers, and coordinate volunteering among the graduate student membership. During the 2023 AAS Meeting in Ithaca, NY, I funded and organized a follow up to the 2022 LGBTQ+ breakfast event, developed and emceed a "Storytellers" event for members at a variety of career stages to describe their experiences in the field, and hosted a DEI discussion (Lunch of the Future) to acquire community feedback on issues of concern to the society. These topics included field work safety, the meeting code of conduct, and how to reach out to colleagues in the margins of arachnology, including non-professionals/hobbyists, museum curators, postdoctoral researchers, and graduate students.
- 3) Create a free service for English language review of papers to be submitted to the Journal of Arachnology. This service, ELRAW, was the brainchild of Shahan Derkarabetian. We collaborated to create a review procedure and information for the AAS website, which we released at the ICA 2023 meeting.

- 4) Arranged for committee review of the AAS Code of Conduct, Host Meeting Handbook, and AAS Website to promote safe and equitable treatment of members and accessible meeting practices, and to provide information about best practices in fieldwork and other arachnological career-relevant subjects: [Education: AAS | American Arachnological Society](#).
- 5) Discussion and mediation of conduct incidents at AAS and ICA meetings with affected parties. Following the 2022 AAS and 2023 ICA meetings, I responded to concerns about inclusive speech and member conduct via e-mail, and maintained both member privacy and constructive dialogue.

The idea for the AAS DEI committee came about at a critical time for many early career researchers at AAS, myself included, but, of course, no road map existed for how to approach DEI in a taxon-specific organization like the AAS. I am ultimately proud of what we were able to accomplish, particularly given that the activities of this committee were achieved via generous volunteer effort and largely without funding from the AAS or host institutions. However, given the anti-science and anti-DEI sentiments in the United States, and my 5 year tenure (longer than all elected roles to the EC), **I believe it is time for me to step down from my role as chair of the AAS DEI committee.** I invite the EC to discuss whether the role/committee should be reinstated and, if so, whether to elect or appoint a new chair. I will be happy to support this discussion in whatever ways I can be helpful.

I thank the AAS leadership for the opportunity to contribute to the mission of the AAS and sincerely hope my efforts improved membership experiences with the society.

Best regards,

Mercedes Burns
Associate Professor
University of Maryland, Baltimore County

2025 Common Names Committee Annual Report

The current members of the common names committee are:

Sarah J. Rose PhD (Chair)
Lecturer
The Ohio State University
srose891@gmail.com
Soon to be Assistant Professor Arkansas State University!

Richard Bradley PhD
Associate Professor Emeritus
The Ohio State University
bradley.10@osu.edu

Ray Fisher PhD
Entomologist at Mississippi State Entomological Museum
Based in Fayetteville, Arkansas
Naturalist; systematist; mites, spiders, ants, aquatic arthropods
jrf521@msstate.edu

Kari J McWest MS
West Texas A&M University (former)
REVSYS, AMNH
kari.mcwest@gmail.com

Susan E. Riechert PhD
UTK Distinguished Service & Chancellor's Professor
The University of Tennessee Knoxville
rieichert@utk.edu

Louis N. Sorkin B.C.E.
American Museum of Natural History
sorkin@amnh.org

The Acarological Society was emailed on 6/30/24 to see if their society would be interested in taking ownership of the Acari common names. I emailed Dr. Alexandra Revynthi as she is listed as the current president on their website. They considered the idea, but in the end decided that it should remain with the American Arachnological Society.

Ray Fisher is still working on updating Acari. I have emailed asking for an update from him but have not received a reply at this time. If he is unable or unwilling to complete this within the next year, I feel the committee should recruit someone else familiar with the Acari to assist in making those updates. The Acarological Society did recommend some people that might be willing to help, and they will be contacted once a response (or if there continues to be no response) from Ray Fisher.

We received and approved one common name request. *Hogna coloradensis* now has the common name of Rio Grande wolf spider.

Submitted by

Sarah J Rose PhD

Chair of the AAS Common Names Committee

ELRAW 2025 Report

Unfortunately, we did not receive any new requests for English language reviews over the past year.

This is perhaps due to a lack of advertising. I personally have not made much effort to advertise this, and outside of the webpage on the AAS website, I'm not sure what else has been done. Another potential reason might be that the services are only for manuscripts submitted to the *Journal of Arachnology*. My initial goal for this was to make it available to any arachnologists submitting to any journals.

I recommend two things:

1. Perhaps it would be best to find an enthusiastic student to help with advertisement, and spend some time sharing this with relevant colleagues more regularly and more widely.
2. Potentially changing the reach of ELRAW to not just *JoA*, but to any journal. To limit being (potentially, hopefully) overwhelmed, we could limit the topics that we review (e.g., taxonomy only), at least for a time.

This would be something to be discussed with the new chair of the DEI committee, if we choose to continue with that committee.

From: Jillian Kurovski-Legris <jkurovski2@huskers.unl.edu>
Sent: Monday, June 2, 2025 12:02 PM
To: Eileen Hebets <ehébets2@nebraska.edu>
Subject: AAS Social Media Updates

Hi Eileen,

Below is a quick recap of AAS social media:

1. AAS' top performing pages are on Bluesky and Instagram
2. Minimal posting to TikTok
3. Bluesky followers increased by 1.3k followers in the past year while Instagram has increased by ~300 followers
4. Not as many posts this year, but follower count as increased with steady interactions on posts.
5. Goran Ahmed Shikak has helped with Instagram a lot responding to messages and occasional posts
6. Student Discord continues to be a good virtual location for students to ask questions and meet - it's heavily used just before and during the conference by students to meet one another before the conference, receive updates during the conference, and create meetup opportunities.
7. Remaining Budget for social media is ~\$400

Let me know if I should add anything else.

Best,
Jillian

Jillian Suh Kurovski-Legris
PhD Student | Hebets Lab
University of Nebraska Lincoln
jkurovski2@huskers.unl.edu

ARACHNO-ANSWERS: 2025 Report – Jerry Rovner

I answered 225 questions during the past year (June 1, 2024 – May 31, 2025): ≈ 19 questions/month.

The five months of June through October were the busiest: ≈ 28 questions/month.

January and February were the least busy: 8.0 questions/month.

March, April, May, November, and December were nearer the lower end of the range between these extremes: ≈ 14 questions/month.