

AMERICAN ARACHNOLOGY

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What's Inside

1998 CIDA / AAS Meeting Report	1
Oral Presentation Titles & Authors	2
Poster Presentation Titles & Authors	9
1998 Student Paper Awards	13
1999 A.A.S. Meeting, Trinidad	14
1998 A.A.S. Election Results	14
A.A.S. Research Fund & Awards	14
1998 CIDA / AAS Group Picture	15
European Colloquium of Arachnology ...	16

--Dates & Deadlines--

- A.A.S. Research Fund 31 October (Pg. 14)
- 1999 Univ. of West Indies, Trinidad ; 27 June - 2 July
- 2000 University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY USA
- 2001 Keene, New Hampshire USA
- 2002 Riverside, California USA

The 14th CIDA Congress and 22nd AAS Meeting

The Fourteenth International Congress of Arachnology and the 22nd meeting of the American Arachnological Society were held jointly from 27 June to 3 July at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, Illinois, USA. It was most ably hosted by Petra Sierwald and a large cast of hard-working folks. This Congress was a massive undertaking, but it was conceived, coordinated, and conducted in a grand and gracious style. All attending would agree that Petra, her staff, and other supporting arachnologists deserve our gratitude and heartfelt thanks for a wonderful time and a stimulating meeting that will be long remembered.

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This probably was the largest gathering of arachnologists ever seen on our planet. There were 315 registrants from 33 countries and five continents. Two symposia were held which will be hallmarks for years to come. One on Spiders in Agroecosystems had 16 papers presented, and the other was about Higher Level Phylogenetics of Spiders, with 9 talks and a roundtable discussion. There were 122 other talks, three of which were plenary lectures. Eighty-three posters were presented during the meeting.

Many social events were planned throughout the meeting, timed to give participants a chance to digest what they had been hearing and seeing about arachnids, and also some of the wonderful diversity of foods offered by Chicago. These began with the opening reception, where hungry and thirsty arachnologists sent the servers into overdrive while renewing acquaintances. The next evening offered a cruise on the Chicago river, where an enthusiastic tour guide related the rich history of Chicago and it's unique architecture while slowly moving through the heart of the city.

Monday evening provided a buffet and an informal poster reception where one could chat with poster presenters while enjoying the tasty Philippine fare. This was followed by the traditional auction of arachnological paraphernalia. This has been named the Vince Roth Memorial Auction for one of it's founders and advocates. It was called by one of the favorite auctioneers, George Uetz. Many rare articles were offered by arachnologists from across the globe.

Three different field trips were offered to cover a variety of natural areas found at the southern tip of Lake Michigan. One went to the Richardson Wildlife Foundation area where prairies, wetlands, and sand habitats were traversed. Another trip went to the Palos Hills and Sag Valley, areas of native woodlands and managed prairies. The third excursion took participants to Ryerson Woods, another large native Illinois woodland within the Forest Preserve. An open house for the Museum's Insect Division and the opening of a rare arachnological book exhibit in the Museum's extensive library also occurred. Hungry field trippers were treated to another of Chicago's traditional foods, Chicago Style pizza, followed by another traditional AAS event, an informal slide and video show. This was the most extensive one yet, and had a wide diversity of offerings owing to the international nature of the Congress.

Thursday evening was the social event of the Congress, with Dr. Otto Kraus speaking about the history of CIDA and the series of Congresses. The gala banquet followed, held in the Museum's great Stanley Hall. Participants were treated to a fine dinner while listening to a chamber orchestra, then many danced to another of Chicago's trademarks, jazz and blues music. The first floor exhibits were also open, allowing folks to leisurely wander through the Museum while enjoying the music and company of other arachnologists.

The last day had the CIDA and AAS business meetings, where some important decisions were made regarding the future of these arachnological organizations. Many remaining participants enjoyed the "taste of Chicago" festival in nearby Grant Park, and those that stayed that evening were treated to two fireworks displays, one by Mother Nature, and the other, more traditional one for the 4th of July.