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2025 American Arachnological Society Meeting

The annual meeting of the American Arachnology Society will be held at the Colorado School of Mines, in [Golden, Colorado](#), USA 15-19 June 2025. The local meeting host is Dr. Paula Cushing, Denver Museum of Nature and Science (DMNS). Information about the meeting is at: <https://www.americanarachnology.org/aas-meetings/aas-meeting-2025/>.

Do not delay! You know you need your arachno-friend-fix in these crazy times. Early bird registration deadline is fast approaching. **Registration costs will increase by \$100 USD on May 1st.**

Golden is a former gold rush town located at the foothills of the Rocky Mountains in Colorado. The town quickly became an important supply stop for miners seeking their fortune in the gold and silver mining camps high up in the mountains. It became the capital of the Colorado Territory in 1872. In 1876, when Colorado became a state, Golden vied with Denver for the honor of becoming the new state’s capital city but it lost, much to the chagrin of its business owners. Golden is just a 15-minute drive to the foothills of the Rocky Mountains and is now home to many restaurants, boutique stores, bars, and galleries/museums.

The meeting schedule includes a pre-meeting Linyphiidae Identification Workshop (held at the DMNS) on Saturday, June 14th with an optional carry-over in the morning of June 15th. This workshop costs \$75 and includes a lunch coupon for the 14th. Each participant should have their own copy of *Spiders of North America: an identification manual*, or SNAIM. If you do not have a copy, contact [Paula Cushing](#) and she can provide an AAS member discount copy for \$50 (in addition to the cost of the workshop). Additional loaner copies of SNAIM will also be available for use by participants.

There will be fun activities for accompanying people who pay the \$100 accompanying persons fee including one or more of the following (depending on interest): a walking tour of Golden, a visit to the Denver Art Museum, a visit to Dinosaur Ridge, or other organized local activities.

Meeting overview:Saturday, June 14th

- Pre-meeting Linyphiidae ID workshop at DMNS

Sunday, June 15th

- Registration and Welcome Social
- Student/early career [offsite social](#)
- Poster presenters can hang posters

Monday, June 16th:

- Plenary (see below for speakers)
- Oral sessions
- Group photo
- Poster session in the evening
- Poster judges to meet that evening
- AAS Executive Committee meeting

Tuesday, June 17th:

- Plenary (see below)

- Oral presentations
- Evening social at [Goosetown Station](#) with live music (bring your own instruments to jam!)

Wednesday, June 18th:

- Oral sessions
- Business meeting (concurrent meeting for student presentation judges)
- Evening banquet complete with silent auction, award presentations, and live music by [The Dollhouse Thieves](#)

Thursday, June 19th:

- Optional post-meeting fieldtrip to Rocky Mountain National Park (no collecting allowed)

Plenary Speakers: The AAS is thrilled to announce that the 2024 recipient of the Norman Platnick Award for Taxonomic Research, [Rodrigo Monjaraz-Ruedas](#) will be one of our Plenary speakers at the 2025 AAS meeting. And we are equally thrilled that [Jessica Garb](#) will also be a Plenary / keynote speaker.

Symposium: The meeting will also include a symposium focused on Genomics organized by Prashant Sharma. Symposium speakers will provide updates on scorpion genome assembly, sexual dimorphism and orbweaving behavior, silk genomics, assembling challenging genomes, among other exciting topics.

Other Meeting Details: Please see the [AAS website](#) for details about travel to Colorado, dorm and other housing options, abstract submission information. **The deadline for abstract submission is May 9th.**

2025 Norman Platnick Award for Taxonomic Research Deadline

The Norman Platnick Award for Taxonomic Research is for outstanding early career researchers who are no more than six years post-PhD. The award criteria will be based on the quantity and/or quality of taxonomic publications that have been published or have been accepted for publication. The main judging criteria will be that the applicant's publication record shows a strong commitment to morphological taxonomy. The quality of the research, and creativity in approach and dissemination that strives to keep taxonomy relevant, will also be considered. This award will also be judged on performance relative to timeframe/opportunity (e.g., the existing support available for an applicant's research and/or relevant career interruptions due to other commitments will be taken into consideration). The award honors the late Dr. Norman Platnick whose prowess and tenacity greatly advanced systematic research into spiders and other arachnids. The deadline for applications is **23:59 Pacific Standard Time on 30 April**. Information about application packets can be found on the [AAS website](#).

Spider Biology at the Southwest Research Station



Marshal Hedin, Greta Binford, and Paula Cushing will co-teach a Spider Biology Field Course at the Southwestern Research Station (SWRS) in Portal, Arizona from 1-9 July 2025 hosted by the American Museum of Natural History. Cost is \$946/participant. Details about this course are at

<https://www.amnh.org/research/southwestern-research-station/courses>. You can email swrs@amnh.org to request an application. Attendance is capped at 24 and the course is filling up fast (there will be a waiting list). The SWRS is a location with special relevance to arachnology. The first meeting of the American Arachnological Society was hosted by Vince Roth at SWRS in 1972! With this course, we honor Vince's remarkable legacy, and the sustained vision of Barbara Roth.

During this eight night course, participants will be introduced to the outstanding biodiversity of spiders and non-spider arachnids found in diverse habitats of southeastern Arizona; they will gain foundational knowledge of arachnid diversity, anatomy, evolution, and ecology; they will better understand the evolutionary history of spiders, with a focus on relationships among living groups; the class will dive into current scientific research and uncover the cutting-edge questions and approaches used by leading scientists in the field; and they will develop skills in spider collection, photography, preservation, and identification, with a special emphasis on taxa found in the western US and neighboring Mexico.

Herb Levi Memorial Fund for Arachnological Research Project Titles

The Herb Levi Memorial Fund for Arachnological Research was established by the AAS in 2015 to support non-student AAS members (including post-docs) who receive little to no institutional support for their research programs. Current AAS membership is required. The HLMFAR grant is primarily meant to provide seed money to fund fieldwork and to gather preliminary data for future grant proposals. Grants up to \$2000 are awarded. In issue #93 of *American Arachnology* we announced the 2024 winners of the HLMFAR awards but neglected to include details about their projects. Below are the titles of their projects:

- David Chamé-Vazquez of the Instituto Politécnico Nacional (awarded \$1,600) for the project, “The spider family Phrurolithidae Banks, 1892 (Araneae) in North America.”
- Pompozzi Gabriel of the Argentine Dryland Research Institute, CONICET in Mendoza, Argentina (awarded \$1,600) for the project, “Monitoring *Trichonephila clavata* across the southeastern United States.”
- Angela Chuang of Clemson University in Clemson, South Carolina, USA (awarded \$1,800) for the project, “Understanding the amazing behavior of *Attacobius* spiders (Corinnidae) riding on ants.”

Thanks to Donors!

Invest in Arachnology – Donate to the American Arachnological Society! We are a 501(c)(3) organization so your donations (if you are in the US) are tax deductible. As announced in issue #93, the AAS recently established two named donor levels: Golden Hypochilid donors who give \$500 or more to the society and Salticid Donors who give \$100 or more to the society. We are also grateful for anyone who decides to make

a lifetime commitment to the society by becoming Lifetime Members. Below we thank our 2024-2025 donors:

Golden Hypochilid donors: Ann Rypstra; Chris Malloy; Jason Bond; Jerry Rovner; Linda Rayor; Paula Cushing; Richard Reading of the Butterfly Pavilion in Westminster, Colorado; the La Junta, Colorado Tourism Board; and Scholastic Books.

Silver Salticid Donors: Al Cady, Randy Supczak, Andy Roberts, Cole Nelson, Gail Stratton, Jack Cowart, James Starrett, and Ming-Yi Lai.

And welcome to our new Lifetime Members: Ian Ashton, Lisa Johnson, Michael Sitvarin, and Robin Taylor!

Donations power the work of the AAS and advance scientific research into all aspects of arachnology. Donations can be made online at: <https://www.americanarachnology.org/society/donate/>

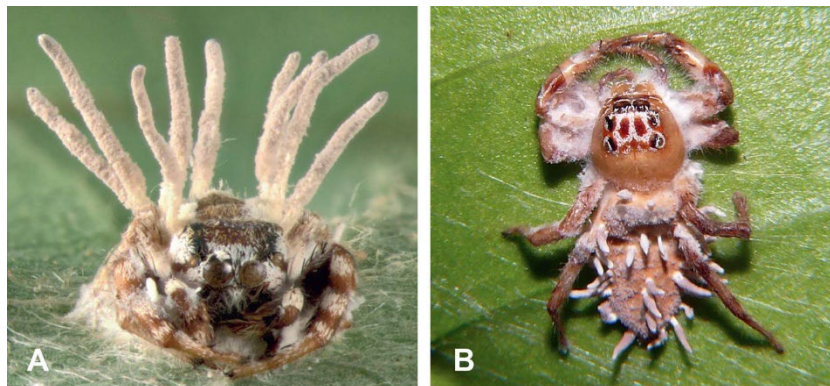
Highlights from *Journal of Arachnology* Volume 52



Competition for mates can be intense if you are a predator. [In JoA 52\(3\)](#), Jules Thornton Wyman and colleagues reported on male scorpions in the genus *Tityus* that arm wrestle, presumably to determine who is most deserving of a mate. Little is known about male-male competitive interactions in scorpions. In this study, the authors describe a novel, ritualized behavior they call “arm-span competition” during which two male scorpions face off and extend their pedipalps laterally, as if comparing sizes in arm span. This behavior has only been reported in one other very distantly related scorpion family, suggesting that the

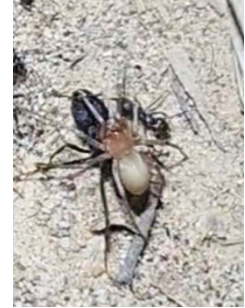
behavior may represent a case of convergent evolution. Like two graceful (and non-combative) boxers, the males face-off, mirroring each other’s movements as they move up and down a tree trunk. They occasionally knock their metasomas, or stinger-equipped tails, against one another, always careful to keep their stingers tucked away. During this entire face-off (lasting more than 20 minutes), the males keep their pedipalps extended, occasionally grasping each other’s chela, or pincers, and sometimes making prolonged contact with their chelicerae, or jaws. They go head-to-head and face-to-face flexing their scorpion pincer-equipped arms all for the chance to attract a mate.

In JoA 52(2), Martin Nyffeler and Nigel Hywel-Jones published a [review of spider families parasitized by fungal pathogens](#). The review included some spectacular images of these infected spiders:



Pelegrina proterva (Walckenaer) (Salticidae) parasitized by *Gibellula* cf. *leiopus*, photo by Mary Jane Hatfield; B) *Mopsus mormon* Karsch (Salticidae) parasitized by *Gibellula* sp., photo by Steve & Alison Pearson.

Also in JoA 52(2), Gabriel Pompozzi and Florencia Fernández Campón published an article describing the bizarre habit of [Attacobius nigripes \(Mello-Leitão\) spiders in the family Corinnidae to hitch a ride on the back of workers of the leaf-cutting ant, *Acromyrmex lobicornis* Emery](#). It is not known why *Attacobius* jump on board the worker ants. However, when forcibly removed from an ant, a spider will find a new ant to use for its transportation. The spiders are not myrmecophages (do not attack the worker ants) and seem happily content to ride on worker ants, not just on winged alates. Their report extends the geographic distribution of this spider and associates *Attacobius* with *A. lobicornis* for the first time.



Spiders of the Coast: Building the Tree of Life for Arachnids in Magic: The Gathering

In 2025, arachnologists Marc A. Milne and Shahan Derkarabetian published a pivotal paper providing insights into what science nerds do in their spare time:

Milne, MA & Derkarabetian S. 2025. Spiders of the coast: building the tree of life for arachnids in Magic: The Gathering. *Banisteria* 59: 38-51.

Given that the editor of this newsletter has never played “Magic: The Gathering” (although she does consider herself a science nerd who does other interesting sciency things in her spare time), she will directly reproduce this article’s abstract: “Science communication is an important part of being a scientist and can take on many forms. This article combines our love for our science, arachnid taxonomy and evolution, and one of our hobbies, the Magic: The Gathering card game. We introduce both the hobby and the science, then we take our roles as scientists and naturalists into the realm of Magic: The Gathering (MTG). Here we conducted the first systematic analysis of creatures within the MTG multiverse, focusing on those that are considered arachnids in our plane of existence. We downloaded card photos of all spider (and other arachnid) creature cards and used the illustrations to create a data matrix of characteristics that was used to create a “tree of life” (phylogeny) for all creatures examined. Based on these results we propose the first taxonomic classification for arachnids of MTG, focusing on spiders. We then discuss some aspects of spider evolution in the MTG universe.” The full publication can easily be found online.

Goldie the Eyeless Tarantula

By Cassie Harper



[Butterfly Pavilion](#), is an invertebrate-only zoo located in Westminster, Colorado, and is home to 2 local celebrity tarantulas. Guests have been holding our “Rosies” the Chilean rose hair tarantulas, *Grammostola rosea* (Walckenaer) since the zoo opened in 1995 and last summer Goldie a Chaco golden knee, *Grammostola pulchripes* (Simon), joined the tarantula ambassador program as well. We received our Chacos from Pikes Peak State College) in early 2024 and one of them, Goldie #12, arrived with no eyes.

Butterfly Pavilion’s entomology manager Cori Brant said that Goldie #12 has no visible sign of trauma or injury, but she appears to be completely lacking any eye anatomy. She has molted once since joining our collection, with no change to her eyeless condition. While we don’t know for sure if she hatched as a sling without eyes, Cori thinks it is unlikely that #12 will ever grow (or regrow) them. She has no limitations preventing her participation in the tarantula ambassador program, so she is a part of the regular rotation.

Willow Hall, a fellow tarantula handler at Butterfly Pavilion, helped me make observations about #12 during a recent shift handling her. They noted that she is easy to wake up for her shift and tends to be more curious about what's touching her (usually the soft end of a paintbrush) and does not get easily startled or react with fear when touched. All of our tarantula ambassadors tend to be pretty relaxed and hard to faze, but #12 even more so than others. She moves slowly and does a lot of what we call "curious feet," reaching out toward the paintbrush with her pedipalps or front legs. Once she's been picked up, she does seem to walk a bit more thoughtfully than other tarantulas and seems more perceptive to the handler's movements.

As a tarantula handler at Butterfly Pavilion, my usual strategy with nervous guests is to point out the tarantula's eyes. I say things like "She has 8 eyes but she can't even see very well! Isn't that silly?" I think that once people remember they're looking at another animal, they're able to forget a little that the animal is a huge spider. The only thing very different about handling Goldie #12 is that I have to change that strategy. Guests don't usually notice anything different about her but when we point out what's missing they always react with interest. Aside from that, she behaves very similarly to all the other Chacos we handle, likely because the ones with eyes are not relying on their sight much either.

As Butterfly Pavilion's Goldies continue to grow and molt, our curatorial team will certainly be keeping an eye on #12 to see if there are any developments. Either way, she will continue to educate visitors and help them connect with those lesser-loved invertebrates, with or without eyes.

In Memoriam – Allen Brady



Dr. Allen Brady died Thursday, November 7, 2024 in Holland, Michigan at the age of 91. The following is a tribute to Allen Brady by George Uetz, Tom Bultman and Jamin Dryer. Allen Brady received his B.S. at the University of Houston in 1955. He then spent two years in the US army at Fort Riley, Kansas, where he met his future wife, Sara Louise Choplin. He returned to the University of Houston for his Master of Science degree where he was advised to apply to Harvard and pursue work on spiders (he had been intending to focus on marine invertebrate biology). He entered graduate school at Harvard as Herbert Levi's first graduate

student and received his PhD in 1964. Allen taught at Hope College for one year as a Kettering Teaching Intern in 1964, then was a visiting professor at Albion College for a year and subsequently returned to Hope, where he stayed until retiring in 2000.

George Uetz sent the following remembrances:

I met Allen Brady when he was a Visiting Assistant Professor at Albion College, where he taught a class on "The Biology of Arthropods." It was only my sophomore year, but that one course determined the trajectory of my future academic career.

I remember Allen on a field trip, pointing out a spider from about 10 feet away, saying "That's an immature male *Pardosa milvina*." I was dumbfounded, because to be able to do that, he:

- 1) had better eyesight than a 20-year-old;
- 2) recognized that the 0.5 cm spider was an *immature male*, with pedipalps that were swollen but not yet open and sclerotized;
- 3) recognized its *species* (!).

In hindsight, he might have known what the spider was based on other information, e.g. time of season, microhabitat, etc., but I remain impressed to this day.

I visited Allen many times in his office at Albion, and later when he was a professor at Hope. I was amazed by the fact that he had “pet” spiders from his trips to Central America, including a gigantic *Dolomedes* and a rare *Cyclocosmia*, a most unusual looking mygalomorph spider. I was also awed by the many illustrations of wolf spiders from his taxonomic publications. His work - especially the drawings of genitalia - was meticulous in detail, and often done freehand, going back and forth between the stereomicroscope and paper. During these visits, he gave me advice about courses I should take, spider-related topics I might include in term papers I had to write, and places to apply to grad school.

Allen was certainly an inspiration to me, and we remained friends as well as colleagues over the years. His influence on me extends beyond what might be expected from a typical academic mentorship, as Allen’s Texas drawl is the source of my own mispronunciation of spider names – I still call my favorite orb weavers “Met-ah-pie-rah” and “Ar-gy-o-pee”. His legacy continues with all the students I have mentored (including the co-authors of this remembrance). Until recently, Allen regularly attended AAS meetings, frequently giving papers on his research, and at these meetings, he was always delighted to talk with the students I brought to meet their “academic grandfather.”

Allen had a long and distinguished career in Arachnology. While a systematist might be better at reviewing all his work, we are all familiar with his revision of the Genus *Lycosa* into *Hogna*, *Gladicosa*, *Rabidosa*, *Tigrosa* and *Varacosa* (which has had great impact). He was also President of the American Arachnological Society from 1991 to 1993.

Remembrances from Tom Bultman:

My first encounter with Dr. Brady was as a student in his Introductory Biology course at Hope College. He delivered lectures on animal diversity, ecology and evolution. He was quite different from the folks I had grown up with in a small Michigan town. He had a Texas drawl that was certainly something I was not used to and he was attracted to animals that most people try to avoid. Taking his Invertebrate Zoology course the following year I became hopelessly caught in the web of biology and joined his lab where we conducted research on spider communities along a successional gradient. Allen inspired many students, including myself, to pursue careers in biology. His fascination with spiders never waned, even late in life after bad knees (which he blamed on years of playing recreational basketball – the Biology Department had a fairly successful team in the city league) robbed him of mobility, his excitement when talking about spiders was like that of young child. Allen and I taught several Florida May terms together which were focused on marine and terrestrial invertebrates and included camping at the celebrated Torreya State Park. Allen’s excitement during night collecting forays was contagious. Those were often followed by late night card games of Hearts, which Allen took very seriously and played to win!

A favorite activity of Allen during Holland’s often long, bleak winters was attending Hope College basketball games. He had season tickets and would often travel to away games as well. He always kept a box score while watching the games, a rather unusual habit in basketball. We travelled together to most of the venues around the league and also went together to the “final four” appearance in Virginia by the Hope College men in 2008. He enjoyed all the games, particularly the ones in which we beat our rival, Calvin College. He was a human encyclopedia of past players, teams and games, but only during time outs. When the ball was in play, he liked to concentrate on the game – no talking.

I owe my career to him, as it was his Invert course that propelled me into biology. I will always cherish the times we had together as a mentor, colleague and friend. He will be deeply missed.

Remembering Allen - Jamin Dreyer

It is without exaggeration that I say Allen’s influence on me likely exceeds any adult mentor save my own parents.

I met Allen via Tom Bultman and the famous “Florida Invertebrates May Term” after my Junior year at Hope College (2005). He was already retired and I was charting a new path forward in life after ending a nearly ten-year competitive swimming career and reconsidering my interest in secondary education. Encouraged by other Hope Biology professors to pursue research, in the Fall I found a comfortable home in the “lab” that Allen shared with fellow *emeriti* Eldon Greij and Harvey Blankespoor. Over the next three years I worked towards graduate school while simultaneously studying under Allen to (re)describe obscure species of Lycosidae in the genera *Trochosa* and *Varacosa*, traveling to AAS meetings in Baltimore and Pennsylvania, returning a van load of specimens to the AMNH, and enjoying countless stories of Allen’s past as a youth in Texas, graduate student at Harvard, and professor at Hope. He welcomed me into the tiny yet incredibly collegial arachnological community, taught me to illustrate spiders as he had learned from Herb Levi, and encouraged friendly rapport with other arachnological titans including the late Norm Platnick and Charlie Dondale around whom I could only feel awe.



Florida Invertebrates May Term 2005

After I left Michigan for graduate school at UW-Madison in 2008, I saw Allen only infrequently. But I often heard about him from Tom or my parents who saw him regularly as fellow Hope College Basketball season ticket holders. For me, Allen unpretentiously opened up a new world of science, one that has now become my career, by being a man of immense passion and patience. He was an exemplar of grace, humor, and intelligence that still shone brightly when I last saw him in July 2024 and still shines even now.

From his published obituary

In 1988, his former student, Dr. Robert Wolff, named a new species of spider, *Cyclocosmia bradya*, in his honor. After the release of the popular film “Arachnophobia” in 1990, he was called upon to educate the general public about spiders in newspapers and on radio talk shows around the country.



Allen continued to conduct research well after his official retirement in 2000. He maintained a laboratory at Hope College and mentored students. One of his most meaningful collaborations came with his student, Lauren Fogg, who helped him prepare and deliver his last professional paper in Denver, in 2016. Allen remained an avid fan of Hope College basketball. He and Sara also took memorable post-retirement trips to Hawaii, Ireland, England, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Allen Brady was a warm, loving husband, father, and grandfather (“Papa”); devoted friend and colleague; and valued mentor to many students. He maintained his belief in the good of scientific knowledge. He believed that understanding and stewardship of the earth are fully consistent with Christian conviction. The Bradys were lifetime members of the First Presbyterian Church of Holland.

The family will schedule a Remembrance of Life gathering at Dykstra Funeral Home (Northwood Chapel on Douglas Avenue) sometime in spring 2025.