

BUPRESTIS

A semi-annual newsletter devoted to the dissemination of information about buprestids and students of this group

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Dear friends,

Sometimes it is difficult to believe that six months can be such a short time. A lot of work kept me busy, unfortunately very little that had to do with the buprestids.

Well, you know, this newsletter is only as good as you make it! We are approximately 80 working on buprestids, but only 15 had sent any information the last year! What are you doing? Are you still interested in receiving our newsletter or did you move your interest to another beetle family?

Mexico is waiting for us! Whoever wants to join us, please contact Chuck or me. I will start from Frankfurt/Main, Germany, to be in Acapulco Sunday, 5 July.

I wish all of you peace, health and happiness this New Year.

For our next BUPRESTIS I expect your news until 15 June, 1992.

Best wishes

Hans Mühle
Editor

A. RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AND INTERESTS

Svatopluk **Bily** is going to describe some larvae of European *Trachys* so he would be very obliged for any larval material for this study.

"I am sorry to say so, but my project on *Melanthaxia* has been much more time-consuming than I supposed at the beginning. I have gathered more than 13,000 specimens and only sorting them to the species-groups is work for many months. I would like to ask all colleagues to be patient because I can send back the material far later than I promised."

Takahuru **Hattori** is going to describe new species of the genus *Ovalisia*, captured by him in Taiwan.

Ted **MacRae**'s interests are taxonomy and ecology of *Buprestidae*, with special interest in the North American fauna

Mark **Volkovitsh** is continuing the revision of Palaearctic *Acmaeoderini* and the works on antennal and larval morphology. Papers on new species of *Cochinchinula* (in cooperation with T.J.**Hawkeswood**), on *Sphenoptera* (in cooperation with M.**Kalashian**) and on Australian *buprestids*' larvae (in cooperation with T.J.**Hawkeswood**) are in preparation. Descriptions of new species of Palaearctic *Acmaeoderini* will follow.

B. SPECIES WANTED FOR RESEARCH OR EXCHANGE

C. REQUESTS FOR LITERATURE

D. FORUM

Chuck **Bellamy** has sent the following letter:

Friends,

The Mexico collecting trip is going to happen this coming July. Since I have had only one letter in response to the announcement in the last issue (from Svata **Bily**), I will make the following final suggestions. We will plan to meet in Acapulco on Sunday, July 5 at the airport or bus terminal. Those of you coming from Europe should coordinate your travel plans, meet in Mexico and then travel together to Acapulco. Your choices would be to fly, rent a car or take a bus. Please work together with Hans so we can meet and begin the trip in the shortest period of time.

I believe that it will be best to quickly work into Oaxaca during the early stage of the trip. Hopefully we will scattered in several different vehicles to allow divergence during the days for various collecting interests and convergence at night to reduce room and board costs.

Please let Hans or I know if you wish to be included at your earliest opportunity as our European colleagues must book their airline tickets very early.

Chuck Bellamy (please note my new adress)

The spelling of the name *Coroebus* was emended from *Coraebus* by the French entomologist Mequignon and was reported by Thery in his 1942 Faune de France work. I note that many of you still use the older spelling and suggest that we develop a consensus approach on this. I need to determine whether Mequignon's emendation is acceptable and it may require a formal petition to the ICZN panel. Additionally, it would make sense if all other names derived from *Coraebus* (e.g. *Cisseicoraebus*, *Coraebosoma*, *Brachycoraebus*, etc.) also be emended for consistency. After all, if there is a good linguistic reason to challenge the spelling from the diphthong *ae* to *oe*, then it should carry over to all other words from the same spelling. I would appreciate your comments either directly or through this forum.

In response to Trevor **Hawkeswood**'s rebuttal in the last issue: some of you are simply missing the point of my original comment. It's not differential times of publication or who has money to publish or even what's fair! It's about taking advantage of this forum to communicate and coordinate our individual plans with those colleagues who are interested, not in stealing or being first to publish, but in just seeing the work get done on

our beloved buprestids. Life is neither fair or unfair, we make the decisions and we make the difference. How can it be perceived as unfair when we choose to buck the system and conflict with our peers? You will note please that none of our colleagues who live in the former eastern bloc countries are complaining even though many of them have lost their formerly "free" publication vehicles and now must find other places to publish their works.

Friends, I simply cannot see what is so terrible about stating our plans and projects in order to encourage cooperation, information flow and progress in the knowledge of our mutual interests. Some will do to choose this and others won't. I quite agree that differing opinions provide the challenge to seek the truth and a robust debate is better than any bland or blind acceptance from just one "authority's" stated views. But can't we have both debate and cooperation and won't this lessen the dynamics of our nomenclature?

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Svata **Bily** writes: We ought to wait a little making BUPRESTIS a regular journal. Masao **Toyama** is just starting with his new journal for buprestologists and, I guess, two so specialized journals are too much. I am afraid we will not be able to supply both journals with our contributions regularly. And I am also afraid of the cost of the new journal; we from the so-called postcommunist countries won't be able for some time to pay for it.

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Gyula **Somorjai** who had sent the information on the Fourth European Congress of Entomology, which is held in Hungary, is now living and working in Switzerland. So he wants to excuse himself by anybody who counted on his presence or actual help at this event.

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Mark **Volkovitsh** writes: I must excuse myself for the long delay in returning the material of all those colleagues who had sent it for determination. During the last time I had been very busy with other projects. As we do have financial difficulties I had to earn money for our institute. I hope you will understand our situation and I really hope that this will not last for a long time.

Our present situation does not allow me to send literature, except for sale. I am very sorry, maybe it will be better very soon.

Concerning the buprestological meeting, I think that Europe will be the best place for the Europeans but not for others and vice versa. This meeting should be held within a large entomological meeting to simplify the organization (e.g. the meeting on Central European Entomofauna would be such an opportunity).

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" Solar Lunacy "

An adventure in Baja California, Mexico

by Rick **Westcott**

February 26, 1979: arising at 4:30 a.m. on yet another dreary, dripping winter day in Salem, my family and I set out to see our first total solar eclipse. What are the odds? Seemingly poor, as it is not a time noted for clear skies. In Cascade Locks, the windshield wiper falls off the driver's side of our VW 'Beetle' as the rain pours down. "What is the darn point in continuing?", I say, raging at the leaden skies with more colorful epithets. We press on, wiper wired to its arm, and the skies begin to part in Hood River - - there is hope. As we round the bend west of The Dalles the sun suddenly appears to us in the early morning sky, a sizeable piece of it missing! From that city we witnessed the mindboggling spectacle of the ripple effect and totality. It was the last total eclipse visible from the Pacific Northwest until August, 2017 (Hang in there folks, it will be directly over Salem!), and set the stage for our next celestial adventure, for which we planned 12 years.

June 28, 1991: my son Derek, his friend Dan Snyder and I set forth in our VW bus. Although the eclipse was not until July 11, we were taking no chances that rumors of human hordes, lack of gasoline (or at least long lines at the stations) and water, and potential for being turned back in Baja California were true (They were not!). Another friend, Russell Read joined us in Los Angeles and after camping with the Bellamy's near the border, we crossed it at Tecate just in time to buy fresh corn tortillas for lunch. Stopping under a large live-oak tree, unfortunately sullied by garbage, (One learns to live with this in Baja), I concocted a novel burrito:

peanut butter and sardine. Amazingly, Derek tried this - - and liked it! However, this cannot be compared to the culinary delight, fish taco, which we later savored in Ensenada.

Spurred onwards by the rumors, we hurried south, passing through the "Baja Wonderlands" all too rapidly. The unique countryside never ceases to amaze me with its strange plants and geological formations. Boojums, *cardóns*, elephant trees, century plants, chollas, live-forevers, coyote melons, *mala mujer*, passion flowers, creeping devil cactus and Devil's claw; these are but a few of Baja's plants, many of them found nowhere else on Earth. The boojum is my favorite, its name derived from the Lewis Carroll's "The Hunting of the Snark". Usually it is straight and tapering like a candle (some may reach over 80' high), thus its Mexican name, *cirio*; however, almost any shape imaginable may be seen. Perhaps most curious plant is the creeping devil cactus, which grows only near the Pacific on the Magdalena Plain, Baja Calif.Sur. Unfortunately, the discovery of Artesian water has spelled doom for many of this endemic species, much of its habitat fallen to the plow. Among the more notable landforms are several sand dune systems; an extensive area of granitic boulders and outcrops near Catavina, in the Central desert; the "Chocolate Lava Flow", from Volcán las Tres Vírgenes; and the Sierra de la Giganta.

Stopping only to take pictures, camp, eat (such culinary delicacies as "camp glop" - - various mixtures from cans, cooked with a fresh onion . . . and **always** a *bolillo*) and carefully play frisbee among the cacti and other assorted spiny things, we found ourselves in "Eclipse Country" (the Cape Region) with eight days to spare. Fortunately we experienced unseasonably mild weather (though many of you would still call it hot). We visited our friends the Lasts, who live on the gulf side of the Cape; and the Blanks, who live just north of Cabo San Lucas. Abe Blank, fellow naturalist, took us on some interesting side trips and showed us his private zoo and one in Santiago. In return we provided a 4th of July celebration, having transported an assortment of fireworks some 2,000 miles from Salem! Raquel Blank, 9-years-old, born in Baja, living there and in Australia, had never seen such. Later, she said this display was neater than the eclipse . . . aah, the mysteries of youth!

We explored deserted beaches, viewed spectacular sunsets; ate our fill of mangos, tunas (prickly pear cactus fruits), *ciruelos* (a tropical "plum") . . . and **always** a *bolillo*! We staked claim to our eclipse viewing site. We even took the better part of a day and played *tourista* in Cabo . . . a rough one for me, but I managed - - fueled by tortillas with peanut butter and a cup of *horchata*, a deliciously refreshing drink made from rice, evaporated milk and cinnamon. Abe took us to a beautiful canyon with permanent water and a hot springs. Derek and Dan chose not to hike up the canyon to swim in one of the deep pools, and I wish I had stayed with them: the reliable water supply provides for healthy populations of paper wasps. Never have I seen them and their nests so abundant. Well, of course I had to use my beating sheet (which was an exercise in futility on this trip, as the beetle collecting was abysmally poor) and stir up a nest. The sheet saved my head, as the frenzied wasps swarmed about. Wildly waving my arms and stumbling to the ground in my haste to escape, miraculously I was stung but once - - on the upper forearm. Soon a malaise set in: I only watched and took pictures while the others swam and/or marvelled at the plethora of aquatic insect life. I developed a dull headache, which Abe insisted was from drinking a liter of 'Tecate' the previous night - - - no way; the malaise and swelling lasted two days. Entomology is not listed as a dangerous profession . . . but it can have its moments!

On 9 July we picked up my wife Kathy at Los Cabos International Airport. Gee, it took us five days to get there; it took her five hours! This was her first time in the tropical Cape Region and some acclimatization was necessary. She was so thankful for the wonderful hospitality showed to us by the Lasts, at whose home she spent the night - - in company of our longtime friends the Christensons - - while the "bus crew" once again camped at our eclipse viewing site. We named it "Campo El Hueso" because there were so many cow bones (Too bad we could not have named it "Campo El Buprestido" instead!).

If the eclipse had been on 9 July, we'd not have seen it here. Clouds covered the area. We planned to move, but it was clear on 10 July, so we made our stand. "Eclipse Day" dawned almost cloudless, but the cottony stuff soon appeared. Twelve years of anticipation; nervously - - a wild animal - - I paced the serene countryside, hoping I may find an interesting beetle or two, but primarily watching the clouds play with the sun. The shouts came from camp, which indicated first contact of the moon's shadow. Returning, I found all staring skyward wearing fluorescent-green "Spaceman Spiff" glasses, as Derek and Dan called them. Russell disappeared to have what most of us described as his "out-of-body experience". Prior to totality, neither he nor Sheila Christenson seemed to believe Kathy's description of what they were soon to see and feel; now they are both "true believers"! Pinkish-orange solar flares, wispy outer corona variably streaming into space; a 360° "sunset" below, the stars, planets and transmogrified sun above - - the sudden drop in temperature - - I would describe it as an almost spiritual celestial encounter. So nice to enjoy this with family and friends, not hearing or seeing another living soul. How I can travel to South America in 1994?!

Afterwards, we gave Kathy the "grand tour", once again motoring around the Cape. Kathy made the obligatory visit to a beach, albeit too brief for her; then after a quick stop at a *panaderia* (bakery; our favorite stores in Mexico - - yum!) in San Jose del Cabo, we hastened to get her to the airport. Of course her plane

had not even left San Francisco! So again we played *tourista*, this time in San Jose. Four hours later, Kathy began her 5-hour (Flying time) trip home; the boys and I our 5-day jaunt. It was a most memorable adventure, all 5,000 miles of it.

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OBITUARY

"In memoriam Buprestidarum": Our friend and fellow buprestophile **Frank M. Beer**, born 5 December 1903, died 15 December 1991 in Woodburn, Oregon. During his early career, Frank taught high school, notably in Salem, Oregon. Then for many years until his retirement taught in the Biology Department at Oregon State University, Corvallis. After his wife, Vesta, died in 1979, his permanent residence was in Yuma, Arizona. Many fine specimens of Buprestidae from that region were added to his collection. Frank was a special and giving person, always so free with information and specimens. He had an uncanny knack for locating Buprestidae in their hosts. This skill enabled him to add many rarely species to his collection and provided valuable data for publication. Frank's fine collection of Buprestidae, along with many beautifully prepared Cicindelidae and cychrine Carabidae, was donated to the W.F. Barr Entomology Museum at the University of Idaho, Moscow. Frank, we all who knew you will miss you . . . until we too join you in your search for that "Great Buprestid in the Sky".

Rick Westcott
Salem, Oregon
4 January 1992

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Digitale Literatur/Digital Literature

Zeitschrift/Journal: [Newsletter Buprestis](#)

Jahr/Year: 1992

Band/Volume: [23](#)

Autor(en)/Author(s): diverse

Artikel/Article: [Newsletter Buprestis 23 1](#)