



BIOSPHERE

The Weekly Bulletin of Biology

No colloquium this week.

Thesis Defense

Rachel Rhymer will defend her M.S. Thesis, "Parents, predators, or poop: testing the forces selecting for aggregation in a herbivorous lizard," at 11 a.m. on Friday, 4 December in CR 5330.

New Publications

Perspectives in Phycology has published, "The responses of brown macroalgae to environmental change from local to global scales: direct versus ecologically mediated effects," by Dr. **Steve Dudgeon** and colleagues.

Cellular and Molecular Neurobiology has published, "Maximal expression of the evolutionarily conserved Slit2 gene promoter requires Sp1," by **Jackie Saunders, Roo Wisidagama, Travis Morford**, and Dr. **Cindy Malone**.

CSUN Defrays Thesis Expenses

Melissa Kurman received a Thesis Support Award (\$1000) from the Office of Graduate Studies.

Biologists Present at Entomology Meetings

CSUN Biologists presented at the entomology meetings:

- "A selective sweet tooth: The effects of various injected monosaccharides on the dietary selection of *Rhyparobia maderae* nymphs," was presented by **Wes Tierney** from Dr. **Randy Cohen's** lab.
- "Social media and six-legged science: Lessons from tumblr's 'buggirl'," by **Andrea Haberkern** from Dr. **Dave Gray's** lab.
- "Behavioral interactions between the velvety tree ant, *Liometopum occidentale*, and phorid flies," by **Luigi Vigil** from Dr. **Cheryl Courtney's** lab.

Dr. terHorst's Research on Coral Symbioses Funded by NSF

Drs. **Casey terHorst** and Mary Alice Coffroth (University of Buffalo) have been funded by the National Science Foundation to conduct research on corals and their symbionts. They are studying genetic variation in the ability to live with increased temperature. Their research addresses the question: Does evolution in the symbionts confer

adaptation to the holobiont (coral + symbionts)?

The first experiments will quantify how genetic variation within a symbiont (*Symbiodinium antillogorgium*) affects its own performance in culture and in the host. They will then study how this affects the response of the holobiont to increases in temperature such as is happening as a result of climate change. How does performance depend on particular genetic combinations of host and symbiont? Given that diversity is already being lost on many coral reefs, evolution in symbionts is likely to have emergent effects on the reef community—all the organisms that depend on healthy corals.

terHorst and Coffroth's experiments will examine the effects of temperature through both ecological and evolutionary mechanisms. These experiments will determine the relative importance of adaptation and acclimatization in replicated experimental populations. The prediction is that coral hosts will respond to global change via adaptation of their symbionts.

In addition to doing the science, terHorst and Coffroth will be providing their results to school children and to visitors of the Aquarium of Niagara in forms friendly to marine scientists of all ages.

The grant is for \$873,000, about a half of which is coming to CSUN. Both undergraduates and graduate students will be funded to work on the project.

20 Years of Science Fair Projects

The 2015 volume of *The New Journal of Student Research Abstracts* was just published. Approximately 400 K–12 student authors are showcased in this, the 20th volume.

The journal is full of great examples of student projects, like those presented at science fairs.

Dr. **Steve Oppenheimer** served as the editor of all previous volumes. Helen Chun, Mindy Berman, and Alvalyn Lundgren served as associate editors for this volume.

Biosphere: The Weekly Bulletin of Biology

Department of Biology

California State University, Northridge

Editors: Paul Wilson and Robert Espinoza

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