

These Weeks in Biology

October 15th, 2007 - October 30th, 2007

Special Events

- **2007 Thornton-Massa Lecture, Monday, October 29. Dr. Dennis Gonsalves: "Hawaii's GMO Papaya: An Analysis of Its Impact and Its Controversy"** Dr. Gonsalves' fundamental research on ringspot virus and his practical outlook on crafting a workable biotech solution to disease challenges. Dr. Gonsalves is the director of the USDA's Pacific Basin Agricultural Research Center in Hawaii and the winner of the prestigious Alexander von Humboldt Award for Agriculture in 2002.
- **Dr. Kenneth Miller**, Professor of Biology at Brown University, who is active in science education and defending the teaching of evolution in public schools, made two presentations to large audiences on campus on October 19. First was: "*Scopes-III. Reports from the Front Lines of the Evolution Wars*", the second was "*God, Darwin, & Design: What the Collapse of "Intelligent Design" Means for Science Education in America*". **Special thanks to Professor Pat Bedinger** for arranging the visit, and to co-sponsors: Departments of Biology, Chemistry, and Geosciences, to the College of Natural Sciences, and to the Vice President for Research.

Accolades

- **Professor Jim Detling** was honored for his excellence as a great mentor and ecologist with the 2007-2008 Distinguished Ecologist Award from the Graduate Degree Program in Ecology on Sept. 19th. In addition to accepting the award at a well attended ceremony, Detling presented a seminar at this event titled "*Plant-Animal Interactions: The Critical Role of Graduate Students in the Evolution of a Research Program.*" A number of his former graduate students, including one from Mexico, came back to honor "The Great One".

Thesis Defenses

- **Beth Ross** successfully defended her M.S research, entitled "The effect of habitat shape on movement of Ord's Kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys ordii*) in shortgrass prairie". Congratulations to Ms. Ross and her Major Advisor **Professor Bruce Wunder**.
- **Dan W. Tripp** successfully defended his M.S. entitled "Flea Loads on Black-tailed Prairie Dogs (*Cynomys ludovicianus*) During Plague Epizootics in Colorado". Congratulations to Mr. Tripp and his major advisor Professor Mike Antolin.

Welcome

- The Webb lab welcomes postdoc **Dale Lockwood**. Dr. Lockwood received his Ph.D. from the University of California, Davis, and has worked previously in Fort Collins as a postdoctoral research at the USDA National Center for Genetic Resources Preservation and with the PRIMES program.
- **Assistant Professor Rachel Mueller** arrived on campus in August to begin her work on evolutionary biology of salamanders and fishes, after completing her Ph.D. work at the University of California, Berkeley, and postdoctoral research at the University of Chicago. Dr. Mueller will teach courses in herpetology and in molecular evolution.
- **Assistant Professor Lisa Angeloni** was promoted join to the faculty, beginning in August, to continue her work on behavioral ecology and evolutionary biology of hermaphroditic animals. She completed her Ph.D. work at the University of California, San Diego, and postdoctoral research at the University of Wisconsin and in the Biology Department. Dr. Angeloni will teach courses in evolution and behavioral ecology.
- **Assistant Professor Joe von Fischer** was promoted join to the faculty, beginning in August, to continue his work on ecosystem effects of methanotrophic soil bacteria. He completed his Ph.D. work at the Cornell University, and

postdoctoral research at Princeton University and in the Biology Department. Dr. von Fischer will teach courses in ecology and ecosystem sciences.

Research Funding and Grants

- **Professor Mike Antolin**, along with colleagues from Cornell University, Penn State University, University of Georgia: "Training Workshops on the Ecology and Evolution of Infectious Diseases", National Science Foundation: \$370,000.
- **Assistant Professor Debbie Garrity**: "Calcium Channel Beta Subunits in Early Development". National Science Foundation: \$300,000
- **Professor Mike Antolin and Assistant Professor Colleen Webb**, along with Simon Tavener and Don Estep from Mathematics, and John Moore of the Natural Resources Ecology Laboratory: "UBM Institutional: Towards a Flexible and Extendable Scientific Undergraduate Experience (FEScUE): Blending Mathematics and the Life Sciences", National Science Foundation, \$900,000.
- **Professor and Distinguished Ecologist Alan Knapp**: "Grassland structure and function in response to warming and more extreme precipitation patterns", US Department of Agriculture National Research Initiative, \$400,000.
- **Professor Mike Antolin**, along with colleagues from the Short Grass Steppe Long Term Ecological Research project Indy Burke, Gene Kelly, Nicole Kaplan: "Improvements to the Shortgrass Steppe Biological Field Station", National Science Foundation, \$270,000.

On the Road

- **Professor Mike Antolin and Ph.D. candidate Reesa Conrey** presented their work on the grasslands, especially Reesa's work on burrowing owls, entitled "'Colorado Grasslands and the Population Dynamics of Burrowing Owls", to the Denver Field Ornithologists, at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science (Sept 24).
- **Dhruba Naug** presented a seminar on his research at the Department of Zoology, University of Wyoming
- **Assistant Professor Joe von Fischer** is co-organizing the meeting "Microbial Genomics in the LTER Program" from November 10-12 in East Lansing, Michigan. The meeting is supported by a grant to von Fischer and 5 others.

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