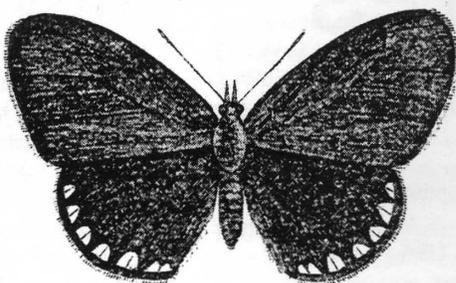


ASSOCIATION FOR TROPICAL LEPIDOPTERA

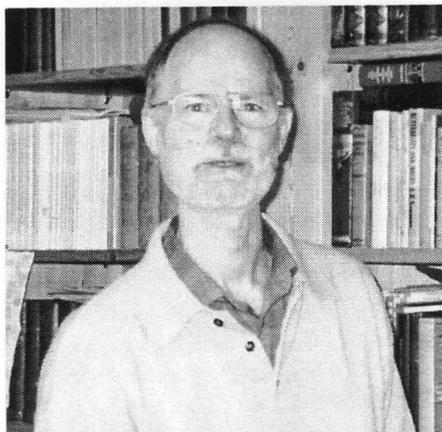
NOTES



December 2006

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS - 2006

Dr. Ulf Eitschberger



Nomination as President of ATL had at first shocked me. How can it be! — I wanted to say. However, after a short time to reflect, I talked myself into agreeing. Why? Vanity or welcome honor? Very little of that, yet a great feeling of responsibility and gratefulness to those friends who thus selected me.

Since 1970, I have been without interruption the chairman of the German Research Center for Lepidopteran Migrations (Deutschen Forschungszentrum für Schmetterlingswanderungen) (DFZS), editor of *Atalanta* (of the DFZS), and since 1983 also publisher and founder of the book series *Herbipoliana*. A short time thereafter, I also took under my wing the publication of *Neue Entomologische Nachrichten* (NEN), beginning with the 20th volume. I, thus, know very well the responsibility, the great amount of time that is involved, and the energy needed in the leadership of a society, or club, as also the editorship involved in the publication of book series. Thus, I could not and did not want to disappoint my friend, Dr. John Heppner, and leave him in the lurch. His energy and enthusiasm must be thanked by all. Dear John, thanks! Without you there would be no ATL, nor the journals *Tropical Lepidoptera* (TL) and *Holarctic Lepidoptera* (HL), nor as well a number of other publications or book series.

Here we also come to a slight misunderstanding. Many ATL members are unsettled, and in part also somewhat angered, that the ATL journals have not appeared for some time. A number of reasons are involved with this. The main reason, however, lies in the failing finances. John really cannot be expected to support TL or HL just out of his own pocket, as I have done already for many years with the DFZS. Without my personal investments in DFZS, there would no longer be an *Atalanta*, or even a DFZS. For myself — as I hope also for most of you — I am not a member of some society because I wish to benefit from it. No! With my contribution, be it in spirit or financial, I want first of all to support and promote the society, just as much as to maintain the general interest, joy, and the good prospects of many aspects that thereby evolve. When with my membership dues there then comes back to me some form of publication, that should be welcome. Yet, the regular issuance of a work should nevertheless not be the sole factor in membership in a society. Dear ATL members: please think about it! Only when a society remains active through its membership, can it continue its development within and without. In this way, there is a great

necessity for contributions required of all of us. We should, thus, energetically organize together to support the ideal, as also the actual ATL: only when we do so can we then also be a critic, when necessary, but only then. First, let us measure our own contribution before we delve into criticizing or judging the efforts of others.

The pursuit of entomology — in our special case that of lepidoptero-logy — promises the best, most outstanding and deeply felt happiness and feelings of joy. Only in work with the Lepidoptera, in the organization of the collection and its scientific study, or in the collecting of specimens, can I forget the world around me, with all its sorrows that arise daily throughout the world. My characteristics, my sole origins of thought, or my philosophical and ethical foundations, I owe foremost of all to the pursuit of nature and the insects. But, we come then to the conventional wisdom, always more emphasized in recent years, that the collectors of insects are to be made scapegoats and criminalized. In the billion actions of harvesting and the slaughtering of organisms of all kinds, as daily are eaten or consumed worldwide, no one questions the morality involved in this — the desperation of the eyes and belly stand foremost over the soul. Thus, billions of creatures are exterminated on a daily basis, especially so among the insects which are killed by cars or other vehicles, as also with the many artificial light traps that are towns and settlements. Just in the little nation of Germany, it is yearly a higher number of insects involved than all the entomologists since Linnaeus, thus over the past 250 years, have in total killed for scientific purposes. A founding pair requires a brood of between 20-30,000 insect embryos, or larvae, in order for its line to survive, yet the average diligent collector has hardly as many specimens in his boxes after a lifetime of work.

How can, or should, the biodiversity of this Earth be known and investigated, while we have the almost universal prohibition of collecting? At the beginning of the 1950s, one went with a figure of 1.5-2 million species as inhabiting the world. The estimates then increased over the years more and more, and now have attained values today of between 20-30,000,000. For myself, I am meanwhile amazed at the enormously large number of living things, and believe that of this estimated number of existing animals, over 90% of these remain unknown and scientifically undescribed, with perhaps a similar number having already disappeared without our knowledge or discovery, due to earthquakes and such over the past 150 years. Too hard and too fast has mankind changed and negatively altered the surface and the atmosphere of our little mother Earth, and now even with irreversible destruction.

Environmental destruction, paired with radiation, contamination and poisoning, intrusions of the state into personal freedoms, and the massive prevention of individual development (ontogenesis) through the outlawing of collecting, are all negatives: the last of these I also take as an injury to my own discoveries (anyone can kill anything anywhere by stepping on it, exterminating or removing it, they just cannot pick off the street a road-killed *Papilio machaon* in order to have it) — the perversion of all this cannot be overly exaggerated. Should all these negative realities keep us from investigating the biodiversity of life, along with all the joys and sorrows involved with this? We must all join [cont. p. 3]

ATL NOTES

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Assoc. Editor: Thomas C. Emmel

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December 2006

No. 4

TO OUR READERS

We await your dues so we can print the journals, so remember the end of year deadline before the normal higher dues are in place for 2007. A number of you have already sent in your dues and I especially should note the extra contributions many have made to support our publications.

There are some exciting ATL trips in line for 2007. If you have the time, take advantage of these expertly managed expeditions that you can join to work with researchers in the field and also sample butterflies and moths yourself, or take photographs.

I echo Dr. Eitschberger's remarks, in that we must get more of our youngsters to participate in nature. The generation that is glued to video games, or that is not allowed to touch anything in nature (as is the case in Germany), will grow up to have no appreciation for nature: they will have no interest in saving parklands if they have no interest in nature. No better way has been known to know nature than has been the efforts to make a collection of butterflies, or rocks, or other kind of nature.

J. B. Heppner
Editor

ATL ANNUAL MEETING - 2007

4-7 October 2007: Gainesville, Florida (joint meeting with the Southern Lepidopterists' Society). Contact Dr. Heppner for details.

ATL TRIPS: 2007

CHILE, 2-24 March 2007

We fly to Santiago and then drive to northern Chile for specialized study of rare Andean blues and other lepidopterans. Cost is \$3,200 plus airfare. Dr. Benyamini, from Israel, will be leading this trip, and he is the world expert of this group of butterflies for the Andes.

GUATEMALA, 2-10/15 June 2007

We repeat our trip again in the late spring when rains start, a time of massive emergence of moths and butterflies. We go to Flores and central mountains. Cost approx. \$1,250, plus airfare. Add-on cost for June 11-15 is ca. \$125 per day. The first week includes an opportunity to also camp at a rich lowland site near the Gulf Coast, to find other species.

ROMANIA, 1-15 July 2007

We visit the Carpathian Mts. and Transylvania. We are organizing this trip with the Romanian Lepid. Society, in Cluj. Cost is approx. \$1,850 plus airfare. We stay one day and night in Vienna on the way to Cluj. Members in Europe can also go by train and meet us in Cluj.

PERU, 2-11/17 November 2007

We visit the Cosñipata Valley, near Cuzco, staying at a comfortable lodge at about 1200m elevation, perfect for a multitude of moths and butterflies. Dr. Gerardo Lamas will be our local guide and expert on Peruvian butterflies. Basic 10-day trip is approx. \$1,450 plus airfare (added days after Nov 11, if staying for extended itinerary, are ca. \$125 per day).

NOTE: ATL trips allow members and friends to fly in from other cities as well and meet at the destination city, if so desired. Members from Europe, for example, can join a trip by flying a route that is convenient for their destination. Each participant books their own flights from recommended routes, so insurance and airline mileage can be obtained. ATL handles all in-country arrangements.

The Association for Tropical Lepidoptera, Inc., is a non-profit organization for the support of research on the biology, systematics, and conservation of tropical and subtropical Lepidoptera of the world. Funding for the Association helps to support research projects, field studies, and publications on tropical and subtropical Lepidoptera. The Association was organized in 1989 in Florida as a tax-exempt corporation under Section 501(c)3 of the IRS Code and is a publicly supported organization as defined in Sections 170(b)(1)(vi) and 509(a). Contributions are tax deductible in the United States.

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23 November 2006

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS - 2006 (cont. from p. 1)

forces to counteract this. Everyone must be actively engaged to allow numerous young boys and girls to become enthralled with nature, and to thereby also be encouraged to form a collection of comparative and selected specimens! A collection of outstanding slides or pictures cannot serve as an alternative to a collection of specimens. Whatever is killed for the collection should, however, be kept, and even a tattered specimen should not go into the ash can. These inadequate specimens can always be used for the study of scales, genitalia, or other studies and purposes, as some study may require. Thusly, I respect and honor the living things, that I, for science, have caught and killed. Entomologists themselves are a species strongly endangered of dying out. We have to help ourselves in maintaining our successors, since we can expect no help from the politicians, in whom in general there is lacking intelligence, tolerance, and vision, while above all having only their own maintenance of power in sight: to name any is but to carry trees back into the forest, as we say in Bavaria.

What I would still briefly like to discuss in this overview, is the relationship of collectors, or hobby-entomologists, to the museum collections and their curators, and vice versa. For some time now, I am so inclined that I need not have everything. What is of importance for me to know is where something is to be found and how I can study it, should I have the need to do so. This requires at the forefront, trust, and also that no material is lost from any collections, whether public or private. Before I would do anything so immoral, I would carry a heavy load of worry to make sure that a public museum became stronger and not weaker. In the final analysis, any material is not just for me to use, but for the use of everyone. On the other hand, it is very disappointing and also an impediment, when private persons who are not working in a public museum are guarded against getting loaned material, even when these persons have shown their qualifications with numerous refereed scientific publications. To further mutual trust, cooperative work should not be hindered because of bureaucratic regulations. Of course, I am proud of my collection, or rather museum: for this I have worked continuously long and hard my whole lifetime, thus having forsaken much of interest, thereunder also to the detriment of my family.

My observations of people and animals, made over my now six decades, as also the concomitant acquired experience, would offer material for a very thick book. Of all this, I have mentioned only a few thoughts herein and beg everyone of you who belongs to ATL or some other society, to contemplate my remarks a little. What we need is cooperation, not confrontation. What we need is mutual trust, and not distrust. What we need is joy and respect for the achievements of other entomologists, even among those we may not particularly like — jealousy and envy are not worthy of a human being. Someone who has achieved something, should receive the recognition he deserves, without denigrations and without regard to his personality. We need the freedom, as much as each of us can do, to follow activities that give us happiness, and the strength from achievements that can be newly completed. We must also be clear that the individual situation, no matter which country on earth, is much too fragile. We must push the politicians to finally provide the museums with more staff. It is certainly an embarrassment for mankind that there are many insect families which are neither worked on nor can be identified even to genus, due to the lack of thousands of specialists. To truly conserve and organize my relatively small collection of somewhat more than 5,000 cases, I should employ 5 preparators, a librarian, and at least 20 specialists. Large museums have, thus, a much greater need, in relation to their material, but on the whole are not much better situated in personnel than I am as maintainer of a private museum.

I would like to close with what most usually begin with, namely, to mention something about my origins. What is most important I put at the beginning, while that which is of less importance can go to the end, since the reader may have reduced attention by the end of his reading, if he even still wants to read to the end. I was born on June 3, 1943, in Stettin, now a part of Poland (as Szczecin). Luckily, shortly thereafter

my father was reassigned from Stettin to Lower Franken, which allowed us to integrate into the homeland of the locals there. Following the completion of my education in the year 1966, I was for 10 years an instructional officer in the German airforce. During this time, I studied biology (2 semesters) and then pharmacy (7 semesters), at the University of Würzburg. After accreditation as a pharmacist, I left the German military to work as a private pharmacist. At the same time, I was allowed to study in the biological faculty as an external student, at the University of Bonn, for my work on the *Pieris napi-bryoniae* complex. The work on this took until 1983, with the completion of my doctoral examination in December 1983. Since 1977, I have been married to my wife, Angelika, who likewise is a pharmacist. In 1981, my son Johannes was born, followed by Oliver in 1989. I thank my wife from the bottom of my heart that she could support the family through her work, leaving me the considerable income of my work entirely for the enlargement of my collection and library.

Ulf Eitschberger

(translated from German, by J. B. Heppner)

GUATEMALA 2006

Following our interesting 2005 ATL trip to Guatemala, we made another expedition in September 2006. Again, we sampled the excellent forest habitats of Ixpanajul Nature Park, just south of Flores, in Dept. Petén. Ixpanajul (pronounced locally as "Ischpahnpahhool") contains 400 hectares of forest, palm swamps, and low hills. Elevations range from about 180m at the cabins we stay at to 300m at a hilltop observatory site overlooking most of the park. Ixpanajul is a private nature park, with ample roads and trails, including several canopy bridges slung over deep ravines. The hills are mostly karst limestone, similar to what one finds in nearby Belize. Accommodations and meals are very good at Ixpanajul. Tikal National Park is just an hour drive north for day-visits to see the Mayan temples and other archaeological sites.

This year, many moths came in to the mercury vapor and blacklight traps and light sheets. Among larger moths were a number of species of Sphingidae and such saturniids as *Copaxa* sp., *Dysdaemonia* sp., *Lonomia* sp., *Hylesia* sp., and many *Automeris* spp. Smaller moths were abundant, as well as many colorful ctenuchine Arctiidae. Butterflies were not abundant but a number of interesting species were still on the wing. There are many birds to see, as well as other animals such as peccaries and foxes. Howler monkeys are common.

After the northern Guatemala site, we again went to the more centrally located Quetzal Reserve site, in Dept. Baja Verapaz. Our sampling was at the Los Rancheros lodge, immediately next to the official reserve, both having good forest remnants. Overlooking a valley of pines and other montane trees, the 1680m elevation site offers abundant moth species at night. Butterflies are not common but some rare species can be found, including one new satyrine found there last year by the Polish researcher, T. W. Pyrcz. At this cloud forest site there are many interesting montane moths, especially various microlepidoptera not found in the lowlands of the Petén, plus many saturniids such as *Copaxa* spp. and *Automeris* spp., sphingids, and ctenuchines. The famous quetzal birds, with their plumage of iridescent green, blue and red, are common at the lodge, coming to the trees there every morning and late afternoon. The lodge is rustic but adequate, and meals are very good. Nearby or within an hour drive are other habitats, like montane oak forest and rain-shadow valley desert.

After three days we went on to the highlands of Guatemala, west of the capital and near Lake Atitlán. This region was not visited last year due to heavy rains and road closures then. This year, weather was fine and the roads had been repaired. We first went to the Reserva Los Tarrales, in Dept. Suchitupéquez. The elevation here is about 700m at the lower reaches, attaining 1500m at the end of the road on the southern slopes of Volcán Atitlán, but where one can hike further up the volcano (top is 3537m). The volcano is visible in the morning, as are three other volcanoes across the valley (one of these was smoking and spewing

small amounts of lava), but by noon they cloud up and are not visible on most afternoons. The Tarrales Reserve is partly cultivated in coffee and horticulture plants, but much of it remains in forest on the volcano slopes, although old secondary. At higher elevations, the reserve has one of the few populations in Guatemala of a rare bird, called the horned guan. The equally rare azure-rumped tanager can also be seen in the higher forests here. Agoutis and small white-tailed deer are common. Of interest here among moths are a small *Rothschildia* sp. (Saturniidae) form, found only on the slopes of Atilán volcano. Butterflies are numerous but difficult to capture unless many bait traps are used, due to the rugged terrain. Tarrales Reserve has good accommodations in two small houses with rooms. Meals are excellent and taken in the 120 year old coffee plantation house.

We remained about a week at Los Tarrales but went away for two nights to stay at a lodge on the north side of Lake Atilán, near the town of Zunil, in Dept. Quetzaltenango. This higher site is called Fuentes Georginas, at about 2450m elevation on the northern slopes of Volcán Sto. Tomas. The hot springs here are developed for bathing, with cabins and a small restaurant. The entire complex is run down, due in part to major damage caused by flooding from the 2005 storms, but it is rustic anyway (the main problem is lack of running hot water, since the pipes broke in 2005, although the springs remain hot). Collecting here is limited, since the nighttime temperatures go very low, but some moths nonetheless are adapted to this, and some nice cloud forest ctenuchines and other moths were obtained. Large tortricines (to 45 mm wingspan) in the genera *Templemania* and *Tinacrucis* were abundant at our lights. During the day, the interesting little copper, *Iophanus pyrrias* (Godman & Salvin) was found abundantly along the road near the hot springs: it reminds one of our tailed western American coppers, like *Lycaena arota*, but is very dark and with larger tails, almost like our little *Lycaena hermes* but without the distinct dorsal markings. This Guatemalan copper

also occurs in Chiapas, Mexico, and is the southernmost true copper in the New World. Its life history remains unknown.

One day while in the Georginas area, we took a day-trip tour further north to the Sierra los Cuchumatanes, mostly a large plateau over 3000m elevation north of Huehuetenango, in Dept. Huehuetenango. This remote plateau has been little explored entomologically, due in part to being the center of decades-long civil unrest in Guatemala, which ended only a few years ago. Roads are scarce, so reaching different sites there is difficult. The plateau itself is mostly grazed grasslands, but some ravines and higher rocky peaks are still covered in pines and cedars. Agaves are also present in great numbers, both planted as field borders and natural. Areas for future exploration include three large canyons on the northeast edge of the Cuchumatanes plateau, in northern Dept. Quiché. The deepest of these narrow canyons, where the Rio Xalbal flows north into the Petén, begins further south near Nebaj and has a 1000m drop down to the river bottom at the northern edge of the plateau, a kind of "Grand Canyon" of Guatemala, virtually unknown to the outside world since almost no tourists have been to this region for the last 35 years. The Cuchumatanes may prove to be one of the more interesting areas of Guatemala, inasmuch as geologically it is the oldest of any region in Central America and already known to harbor many endemic plants, so new and unique species of Lepidoptera can be expected as well.

Guatemala is among the most interesting of the Central American countries, since this is where the last remnants of Nearctic fauna can still be found in the higher mountains, while most of the fauna is otherwise truly tropical. The *Iophanus* copper is just one example of a Nearctic butterfly remnant (the status of this genus remains to be determined, since it otherwise looks like a Nearctic *Lycaena*). At the Quetzal Reserve one also finds Nearctic moths not to be found further south.

We will have another trip to Ixpanajul, the Quetzal Reserve area, and to Dept. Izabal on the Gulf Coast, in early June 2007.

J. B. Heppner

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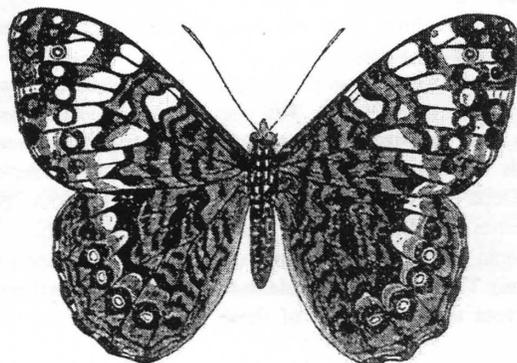
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