THIS MONTH’S GUEST SPEAKER

Erec Toso and Matt Goode
University of Arizona
Tucson, Arizona

Whose Story is it Anyway? Using Art and Science to Revise Snake Myths

7:15 PM
Tuesday, 20th December
Arizona Game and Fish Department Office
555 North Greasewood Road
(between Speedway and Anklam, west of Pima Community College)

Erec Toso has published essays in The Sun: A Magazine of Ideas, Northern Lights, The Arizona Literary Magazine, the Arizona Daily Star, and other local publications. He is a Senior Lecturer and Teaching Advisor at the University of Arizona. Erec’s short prose pieces probe the tension between the desert as a metaphor for spiritual searching and the current role of the desert as playground and object to be packaged, sold, and consumed. His work shows how we may be destroying the desert and, in the process, missing what we came to the desert to find. The heat, sparse resources, and emptiness, which permit no excess, he says, have become home to superfluity and material indulgence. His work asks that we re-examine our material appetite and let the desert help replace a hunger for things with a desire for a richer experience of being alive. Erec was recently bitten by a rattlesnake and is writing a book about the experience.

Matt Goode is a Research Scientist in the School of Natural Resources at the University of Arizona. His research program focuses on amphibian and reptile ecology and conservation, with an emphasis on snakes, and especially rattlesnakes. Current projects include: inventory and monitoring in national parks throughout the Desert Southwest; examining effects of urban development on herpetofauna; ecology and conservation genetics of Tiger Rattlesnakes (Crotalus tigris); effects of fire and grazing on New Mexico Ridge-nosed (C. willardi obscurus), Prairie (C. viridis), and Banded Rock (C. lepidus klauberi) Rattlesnakes; and desert grassland snake community ecology. Matt considers himself very fortunate to be involved with so many talented and dedicated students, technicians, colleagues, agencies, and organizations, which not only make his work possible, but also extremely rewarding. He is also very proud to be a member of the Tucson Herpetological Society, which he thinks is the best darn herp society in the world!

NEXT MONTH’S GUEST SPEAKER

Robin Llewellyn and Sandy Zetlan

A Baseline Herpetological Survey along the Santa Cruz River
Tuesday, 17th January

Tucson Herpetological Society meetings are open to the public and are held on the third Tuesday of each month starting at 7:15PM
Tucson Herpetological Society: The Year 2005 in Review

Young Cage
President, Tucson Herpetological Society, ydcage@aol.com.

This has been a very active year for the Tucson Herpetological Society. In our mission statement you will find the keywords “conservation, education, and research”, and we all are very serious about that mandate.

One thing I had always admired about our previous president, Taylor Edwards, was that he had the THS involved in many, if not all, of the local environmental issues. The THS was influential in decisions that were so important to the well being of our environment, and therefore to our herpetofauna. I knew I couldn’t write letters as eloquently as Taylor, but I vowed to myself that I would endeavor to keep us as active, to maintain the liaisons with the other environmental organizations, and to have our voice heard.

And we have been active! As you read the various committee reports included in this article, you will see that we have been in the middle of conservation issues including the Cienega Corridor, proposed management plans for Saguaro National Park and Ironwood Forest National Monument, input on the buffelgrass problem, and on and on. (Thanks to Dennis Caldwell and all others involved).

We have also made presentations all over the Old Pueblo, introducing people to some of their native herpetofauna, while educating and making a case for understanding and living with these wonderful animals. (Thanks to Ed Moll and Robert Villa and all others involved).

We have helped fund research projects that have advanced our knowledge base (the C.H. Lowe Awards) and acknowledged and celebrated our choice (and a very difficult choice it was) of an individual with outstanding conservation efforts for the Jarchow Conservation Award, Jim Rorabaugh. (Thanks to Taylor Edwards and all others involved).

We have many of our members involved in field research, studying every species of reptile and amphibian imaginable. The immense amount of knowledge and understanding coming from these studies is extraordinary. Much of that comes out in the Sonoran Herpetologist, and in this issue we have highlighted some of the personal highlights of the year. (Thanks to Roger Repp and all others involved).

Month after month we have presented knowledgeable and interesting speakers. It is terrific that so many high quality speakers make themselves available to us. They know that they will be well received by an interested audience. (Thanks to Marty Tuegel and Ellisa Ostergaard).

Both the Sonoran Herpetologist and our website have served us well, and allowed our message to be accessible to many. Thanks to all who are involved (Don Swann and Erik Enderson, and many others), keeping up the good work as we enter this New Year.

What I have talked about here are just a few of our institutional activities. We have lots of other ongoing activities. Some of them, like our recently concluded photo contest, are designed not just to help fill some of our photo needs, but more importantly to involve as much of our membership as possible in our activities. Hopefully the photo contest can be developed into an annual event.

I want to thank each and every one of you for your help and involvement. Hopefully we can maintain that commitment and level of participation. If so, the needs of our environment and its wildlife and our herps will best be served.

Thanks,
Young Cage
Conservation Committee
Highlights for 2005

Dennis Caldwell
Director, THS Conservation Committee, dennis@caldwell-design.com.

The Conservation Committee is dedicated to the conservation part of the Tucson Herpetological Society mission. The committee has been active for years, working on a variety of local and regional issues to conserve reptiles and amphibians. Activities range from producing educational brochures to serving on recovery plan committees, and include both direct conservation efforts in the field as well as writing letters to public agencies on issues related to herpetofauna. Highlights for 2005 included the following:

**Leopard Frog Conservation at Saguaro National Park.** THS and other community groups helped with an experimental conservation program for the native Lowland Leopard Frog (*Rana yavapaiensis*). This project created backyard frog refuge ponds in the Historic Notch Neighborhood, a low-density neighborhood bordering the park. The group also removed sediment from fire-induced erosion from two leopard frog pools in the Rincon Mountains.

**Chiricahua Leopard Frog Recovery Plan.** Dennis Caldwell was delegated to attend meetings of the recovery teams stakeholders subgroup and participate in the drafting of the stakeholders participation plan. This comprehensive recovery plan is designed to recover the endangered Chiricahua Leopard Frog (*Rana chiricahuensis*) across its entire range in Arizona and New Mexico and to work on recovering populations in Mexico as well. This effort is breaking new ground in endangered species recovery by including stakeholders such as private landowners and tribal governments in the process of designing the recovery plan. The THS is committed to seeing this plan through and to keeping the plan focused on recovering this endangered species.

**Living with Venomous Reptiles Brochure and PDF.** Early this year a new brochure was created that combined the long-popular THS handouts Living with Rattlesnakes and Living with Gila Monsters. This was a joint effort funded by PARC (Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation) and the Arizona Game and Fish Department. The brochures were printed in full color with information to help people keep venomous reptiles out of their yards, help them better deal with encounters, and educate them on how to share the desert with these fascinating animals.

**Conservation efforts in the Cienega Creek corridor.** The THS Joined forces with the Cienega Corridor Conservation Council (CCCC) and many other conservation organizations to participate in conservation efforts throughout the Cienega Creek corridor southeast of Tucson. We will keep members informed of projects and volunteer opportunities for hands-on conservation.

**Tumacacori Highlands Wilderness Designation.** A letter of support for a wilderness designation for the Tumacacori Highlands was sent to the Arizona
Congressional delegation. This issue is still pending, and organizers are pushing for Arizonans to write Senators McCain and Kyl asking them to sponsor the bill. For more information and to download petitions, please visit www.tumacacoriwild.org.

**Buffelgrass Designation as an Arizona Noxious Weed.** A letter was sent to the Arizona Department of Agriculture to support listing buffelgrass (Pennisetum ciliare) as a State Noxious Weed. Buffelgrass is a non-native invasive grass that has been implicated in fueling desert fires that destroy native vegetation and negatively impact habitat for wildlife, including reptiles and amphibians. Despite strong opposition from livestock and other agriculture organizations, the push was successful and buffelgrass was listed. This listing will reduce the commercial seeding of buffelgrass in Arizona. Most importantly, it shows that the Department of Agriculture is willing to make policy changes in favor of conservation.

**Ironwood National Monument Management Plan.** A letter was sent to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in response to the agency’s public query regarding future management of the Ironwood National Monument northwest of Tucson. The THS board of directors voted unanimously in favor of a management plan that favored managing the resource for maximum protection of plants and wildlife rather than increased recreational opportunities. Following our mission statement, we also recommended educational outreach and research priorities for the monument. This could be a close call for BLM as they are under heavy pressure from recreation groups to open the monument to more diverse recreation opportunities, especially for off-road vehicle use. The final decision is still pending.

**Saguaro National Park Management Plan.** A letter was sent to Saguaro National Park (SNP) in response to a request for public comment regarding revising the park’s management plan. Again the THS board of directors was unanimously in favor of a management plan that favored the THS mission statement of education, research, and conservation over the other plans for more roads and trails to create more recreational opportunities. And again we suspect that SNP will be under heavy pressure to sacrifice habitat and tranquility to human recreational demands. The final plan is still pending.

**Conservation of Cienega Creek.** A letter was sent to the Arizona Water Protection Fund Commission supporting conservation funding for Cienega Creek southeast of Tucson. This important riparian habitat is home to the endangered Chiricahua Leopard Frog and Mexican Gartersnake (Thamnophis eques). Funded projects will be announced later this month.

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**Speaker's Bureau Highlights for 2005**

Robert Villa and E.O. Moll
Directors, THS Speakers’ Bureau, herpsandviolin@aol.com; e.o.moll@att.net.

Do you remember the first time you experienced or touched a reptile? Is it why you joined this Society? The THS mission statement is “The Tucson Herpetological Society is dedicated to conservation, education and research concerning the amphibians and reptiles of Arizona and Mexico.” As co-chairs of the Speaker’s Bureau, we see to it that, with the help of other volunteers, we fulfill at least one third of our society’s mission: education. Usually with the aid of some reptiles and amphibians, we talk to groups of all ages and attend events that have to do with conservation and appreciation of the environment (and often, we seem to be the most popular table at the event). The computer (donated by David L. Hardy, Sr.) and projector that is used to present Member Meeting Powerpoint presentations is also used to for Speaker’s Bureau talks as well. And, thanks to Dennis Caldwell, the THS has some very colorful and informative brochures to hand out to the public: Living with Venomous Reptiles, Backyard Ponds and the THS Coloring Pages.

The Speaker’s Bureau is involved in a range of activities. Robert Villa and longtime member and past board member Bill Savary have recently translated the children’s coloring pages into Spanish. Speaking in underprivileged schools so close to the international border with Mexico involves spreading the appreciation and demystification of herpetofauna in Spanish. Charles H. Lowe Fund recipient Melissa Amarello has used the Spanish coloring pages in Mexico and one Mexican herpetologist has adapted a central Mexican version of the old THS brochures Living with Rattlesnakes and Living with Gila Monsters. Recently these brochures have been updated into one brochure, called Living with Venomous Reptiles, which is being translated into Spanish as well. Aside from speaking to groups, attending events and translating brochures, Robert Villa has represented the THS on Local Matters, a show that works as an outlet for Tucson’s non-profit organizations on Access Tucson, Tucson’s community cable station. He has also been interviewed in Spanish on Reflexiones Domingo, KUAT’s bilingual local news and culture magazine.

When talking about and/or using live animals in presentations Speaker’s Bureau speakers have adapted a number of common sense ideas that include dressing appropriately, not giving out wrong information when you don’t know the answer to a question, and not using
animals in a sensationalistic, frightening, or surprising way that may make people more scared of reptiles and amphibians than they already are.

If all of this has sparked your interest, please contact one of us at the email addresses above. We can arrange for you to sit in on one of our talks, serve at a table at an event, or arrange a talk for you and/or an interested group.

**Speaker’s Bureau Events for 2005**

Speaker’s Bureau presentations provide herpetological education at a variety of events and to varied audiences.

**Training Programs:** Annually the THS provides 3 to 4 hours of herpetological training to new docents at Tohono Chul Park and new naturalists at Mason Audubon Center. This year 28 docents and 12 naturalists took the course, offered by Ed Moll. A similar course is also offered annually by Ed for senior citizens through OASIS. Ten seniors attended this year’s class given in November.

**Festivals and Special Events:** In 2005 THS participated in a large number of festivals and events, including: the Family Arts Festival (January; about 200 people); Ironwood Festival (March; about 500 people); Cienega Corridor Pioneer Days (April; 570 cars); Colossal Cave’s Sunday in the Park (May; more than 50 people, by Ed Moll); Prince School Fifth Grade Camp (May; 6 programs totaling about 90 children, by Ed Moll); Tohono Chul Park “Park After Dark” (June, about 1500 people, and October, 1600 people). In August, THS was well-represented with a staffed table and speakers (Young Cage and Robert Villa) at the Tucson Reptile Show, which drew about 7,000 people in two days. Other events with a strong THS presence included the Desert Tortoise Council annual meeting (February; 150 people), Earthday at the University of Arizona campus (April), Earthday at Agua Caliente Park (April), and the Harvest Moon Festival (September).

Thanks to the many THS members (too numerous to list here) who helped in these events.

**Educational Programs:** These programs were usually short talks that often included live reptile and amphibian demonstrations. The following is not a complete list (in November and December, we will be providing live reptile programs to eight Pima Community Centers), but includes examples of the Speaker’s Bureau talks for 2005:

- **T. Rex Museum**
  - Jan., about 60 people
  - Ed Moll, Robert Villa

- **Pima Comm. Coll.**
  - Jan., 40 students
  - Roger Repp

- **NW Boys Club**
  - Feb., 20 people, E. Moll

- **T. Rex Museum**
  - Feb., 30 children, 5 adults
  - R. Villa

- **TUSD teachers**
  - Feb., 8 teachers, R. Repp

- **Wakefield Middle School**
  - Feb., 2 classes, R. Villa

- **Natl. Turtle/Tortoise Soc.**
  - Mar., about 20 people
  - Taylor Edwards

- **Boys & Girls Clubhouses**
  - Mar., 4 programs, R. Villa

- **Boys Club**
  - Mar., 20 people
  - R. Villa, E. Moll

- **Urban Wildlife Class**
  - Apr., 70 people
  - Young Cage

- **Kitt Peak Docents**
  - May, 12 people, R. Repp

- **Tucson Botanical Society**
  - May, 15 people, E. Moll

- **Internatl. Wildlife Mus.**
  - Aug., 75 people. Y. Cage

- **Rex Museum**
  - Nov., 25 people, R. Villa

- **Drexel Hts. Neighborhood**
  - Nov., 19 people, R. Villa

- **Littletown Neighborhood**
  - Nov., 13 people, R. Villa

- **Reflexiones Domingo**
  - Nov., TV interview, R. Villa

- **Catalina Community Ctr.**
  - Nov., E. Moll

- **Michigan Retired Teachers**
  - Nov., 30 adults, E. Moll

- **Rillito Community Center**
  - Dec., E. Moll

- **Civano Middle School**
  - Dec., 28 students, E. Moll

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Ed Moll, Speaker’s Bureau co-director, with a Gophersnake (*Pituophis catenifer*) and a budding herpetologist. Photo by Robert Villa.
Herpetological Highlights of 2005

Roger A. Repp
THS Board Member, repp@noao.edu.

Extraordinary weather conditions can set up extraordinary herpetological reactions, especially when moisture is a factor. No knowledgeable mention of the herpetological highlights of 2005 would be complete without discussing the wet winter of 2005 in Arizona. January 2005 seemed to be one long deluge. February had some nice days, but the deluge continued—on into early March.

El Nino, or Tsunami?

Some said the rain was the result of oceanic currents, the “El Nino” effect. Others thought the devastating Tsunami in December of 2004 was the reason. Being ignorant of such things does not allow me to express an opinion—I just know that it rained, and I was more alert than I’ve ever been to catch the reaction of the amphibians and reptiles to the moisture.

There were a couple more good storms in April and May, and then, at least at my plot, came the sizzle and the fizzle. In a nutshell, in the area about 50 miles to the north and northwest of Tucson, we experienced a great winter rainy season, and a spotty monsoon.

In order to get other opinions on the year 2005, I polled a group of local herpetologists to ask what went down on their turf. I asked for any information about the year, general location, and general weather conditions. I also asked for any highlights that they wished to share. Here are their responses:

Dennis Caldwell writes: Lowland Leopard Frog (Rana yavapaiensis) numbers at Cienega Creek County Preserve are the highest I’ve ever seen, and Lowland Leopard Frog numbers in Saguaro National Park East are low. This is another good example of how dramatic the hit or miss summer storms are. Overall, I’m hearing that frogs did well state-wide this year.

The number of non-native American Bullfrogs (Rana catesbeiana) at Sycamore Canyon exploded this summer but thanks to a few dedicated individuals, they have been largely wiped out, and the Chiricahua Leopard Frogs (Rana chiricahuensis) there are now doing great. Urban toads had good reproduction in Tucson and Vail, but nothing out near Saguaro.

Marty Tuegel writes: This summer’s monsoons may not have been great down on my study site at Fort Huachuca, but some interesting observations were made. Western Diamond-backed Rattlesnake (Crotalus atrox) neonates were fairly numerous on the roads. The first observation in six years of a Black-tailed Rattlesnake (Crotalus molossus) was made in the grasslands one August evening. However, the real surprise was the documentation of several juvenile Desert Box Turtles (Terrapene ornata luteola). These seemed to be part of the cohort from about 1999-2001. The last really wet year was 2000, which probably improved the survival rates of the hatchlings from those years, not increased reproductive rates. The number and size of the juveniles observed had not been seen in the past 10 field seasons.

Erin Zylstra writes: Most of my observations come from the Rincon Mountain district of Saguaro National Park, from early March until middle of October 2005. The Rincos, like most of the Tucson area, received a great deal of winter rains; however, the summer monsoons were late and sporadic. The spring herping was great, the summer was tough.

Certain species were plentiful: I personally saw 16 Gila Monsters (Heloderma suspectum), and well over 20 juvenile Desert Tortoises (Gopherus agassizii). I also...
had the pleasure of witnessing four different pairs of Western Diamond-backed Rattlesnakes copulating. But perhaps the best observations from the year were the rare finds: a Ring-necked Snake (Diadophis punctatus) in the open desert, a Sonoran Coralsnake (Micruroides euryxanthus), and one of the largest, if not THE largest, Desert Tortoise ever found in Saguaro National Park (I like to call him The Behemoth). (RAR: further cross-examination revealed that “Behemoth” was 309mm MCL, and had a mass of 5.2 kilograms. That’s a big turtle!)

Danny Brower writes: The information that follows is based on regular walks (5 times per week?) in the general area of the south-central Catalina Mountains. Rainfall was great in the winter. The monsoon was late and spotty, with less rain than areas in the south and west parts of the Tucson basin. Since I live near the site, I am in touch with rainfall amounts.

Herpetological activity was good in the spring, but the monsoon was not very good, especially compared to non-drought years. I noticed that there was no explosion with the first monsoon rains, as usual; things picked up a bit as the season progressed, perhaps because rattlesnakes in particular were out searching for something other than food. (Maybe the late spring rains reduced the “priming” effect of the mid-summer dry spell?)

Most promising was that there was a very obvious increase in rodent activity. Not surprisingly, the species seen (especially Gila Monsters and rattlesnakes) looked more healthy (fat) than for years, on average, and I saw more baby snakes than in the last few years. The spiny lizards all seemed like they would explode.

So, my overall impression was that the excellent winter did not necessarily cause an immediate huge upswing in reptile and amphibian sightings, but I am looking forward to more long-term benefits from the good reproductive year.

Two interesting sightings. One was a Desert Box Turtle (Fig. 2). Unlike one spotted down in the populated part of the Sabino area some years ago, this was up a canyon, and if it was released, it probably had moved some distance. It also was in an area that was grassy and might support these guys. Could there be relict populations from a time when the valley was wetter, hiding up in the canyons? I will keep looking.

Another fun sighting this year was captured in the attached photo (Fig. 1). It requires no explanation.

(RAR: The photo is of a Coachwhip (Masticophis flagellum) choking down an Crotalus atrox).

Young Cage writes: After my son and I returned from a herp photography trip to Sonora, Mexico, there was a casual comment that Samantha, my ten-year old granddaughter (and eagle eyed young herpetologist) had found a small snake in our new and still dry pool. It turns out that she spotted it, and alerted Cheryl. It was small, and colorful, and needed rescuing!

The two of them grabbed salad tongs as the snake tongs seemed too big. After some effort, they were able to get the snake secured and out of the pool. Cheryl was taking it over to the fence in preparation to letting it go when Sam piped in, “Don’t let it go, the boys will want to see it! You never know, it could be a new species.” Cheryl dutifully dropped it in one of our containers.

My son and I had a chance to look in the container. Low and behold, there sat this incredibly beautiful Sonoran Coralsnake. I don’t know about others but I see very few of these jewels. This was only my third in six years and a very aberrant patterned Coralsnake to boot. It was very melanistic; virtually black and white when viewed from above. Yet the red, where present, was vivid. All in all it made for a beautiful animal.

Fourteen inches of candy cane.

Sam was pleased with herself, and I was pleased with her. Now if she can only find me a live Tortolita Ring-necked Snake!

Ed Moll mentions: One non-Arizona herpetological highlight was finding the Snapping Turtle (Chelydra serpentina) “Clem” still alive and well in Wisconsin. She is now 45 years old. In Arizona, a pair of Western Diamond-backed Rattlesnakes were observed mating at Tohono Chul Park on 7 October.

Andrew Holycross writes: My best herp-related moment in 2005 came on the heels of a summer of disappointment. At one historic Narrow-headed Gartersnake (Thamnophis rufipunctatus) site after another we found crayfish present and rufipunks absent or present in diminished numbers and with scars and missing tails. The last week of the year, we were fortunate enough to find a creek uninvaded by the crustacean hords. In short order numerous rufipunks of every age class were found lounging in the willows or swimming in...
frigid waters. Each and every glorious one of them completely UNscarred and with a complete tail!

Paul Condon writes: This year was an interesting herping year for me with help from good friends and my son, Steven. Steven and I volunteered to help Matt Goode with his Tiger Rattlesnake (Crotalus tigris) study and in so doing became intimately familiar with these very special rattlesnakes. Our primary search area was the Saguaro National Park East loop road. The highlight of my tiger searching was finding one on the side of the Douglas Springs Trail in the Rincon Mountains on Sunday 29 May at 1000 h, when there is a significant amount of hiker traffic. The snake had killed a woodrat, which died in the middle of the trail. When I came along, I didn’t immediately see the rat. The snake was stretched out right at the trail’s edge, and people were passing fairly regularly, some stopping to look at it. Once I saw the rat and realized why the snake was so close to the trail, I moved it off to the side. It took the snake about 15 seconds to find the rat and start the eating process. Everything was going along very well. I took numerous photographs, and then a group of people came down the trail on an organized hiking trip. They said they had seen the tiger on the way up. People surrounded the tiger, which upset him greatly and he spit it out. The good news is that the group left, and the snake stayed very close by the rat. I left hoping that he would return to the rat. About an hour later, I hiked back. The snake was gone, and so was the woodrat.

Craig Ivanyi writes: 2005 was interesting. It was a wet year overall, and during the summer (when it really matters to amphibians), so we thought that we could get away with looking for a variety of amphibians later than usual (around the museum and also in the Vekol Valley). We found much less than in years past – even though some of the usual roads had become rivers and potholes resembled ponds! Water all around, few toads to be found! I guess it’s a reminder of how important those FIRST downpours really are to these beasts!

Randy Babb writes: 3 August, 2005. R. Babb made a trip to the country west of Nogales with Tom Brennan to poke around for a day or two. It was one of those rare times when things actually worked out in our favor. In less than 8 hours we saw two Brown Vine Snakes (Oxybelis aeneus), (one was road killed), one Thornscrub Hook-nosed Snake (Gyalopian quadrangularis), one 20-inch (51 cm) plus Sonoran Coralsnake, and numerous other less remarkable animals. It was so spectacular, we promptly left the area under the delusion we were hot and could do no wrong. Needless to say, the remainder of the trip was much less productive.

The Wrap Up
These observations are all outstanding, and need no further comment from this author.

When I dwell on the highlights of 2005, my thoughts center on the wildflower bloom of early March through the unexpected rainstorm at the end of May. I saw more Long-nosed Snakes (Rhinocheilus lecontei) and Sidewinders (Crotalus cerastes) during this time period than in the two previous total years combined. The numbers of Long-nosed Leopard Lizards (Gambelia wislizenii), Desert Iguanas (Dipsosaurus dorsalis), and Desert Spiny Lizards (Sceloporus magister) also skyrocketed above my expectations.

When I look back on 2005, I will think of a pair of Side-blotched Lizards (Uta stansburiana) courting on a rainy January afternoon. I will think of a female Crotalus atrox who drew in three boyfriends in less than five hours time. I will think of six C. atrox pairings in one day. I will think of helping good friends start a study on Arizona Black Rattlesnakes (Crotalus cerberus), and seeing thirty of them at various densites. I will think of five Leopard Lizards observed in 30 minutes. Three of these were females showing red coloration, and a male was observed mating one of these reputed “I’m-red-so-you-can’t-mate-with-me” females. I will think of a Harris Ground Squirrel trying to drag a four foot DOR Gophersnake (Pituophis catenifer) off the pavement. (Turnabout is fair play in the desert!) I will think of 89 Desert Spiny Lizards in a three-week time period, and I will think of 219 Yarrow’s Spiny Lizards (Sceloporus jarrovi) observed in one day.

Whatever the circumstances, whatever the weather, we are blessed to live in this great part of the country. Each year brings about something different for us to behold. Here’s to looking forward to whatever comes next!
The Year's Guest Speakers

Elissa Ostergaard
Program Chair, THS Monthly Membership Meetings, elissaco@yahoo.com.

The 2005 guest speaker series took the Tucson Herpetological Society from Tucson and vicinity. We traveled from mountain ranges like the Huachucas and Chiricahuas, looking for those tiny but adorable Banded Rock Rattlesnakes (Crotalus lepidus klauberi), through Mexico’s Isla Santa Catalina to watch its rattleless rattlesnakes, all the way to South Africa and Vietnam. We heard amazing new discoveries about Gila Monsters (Heloderma suspectum), including that they “sweat” through their cloaca and resorb water from their bladders, and horned lizards, which have pretty impressive crushing power with their jaws. We learned about the federal efforts to restore the Mojave population of the Desert Tortoise (Gopherus agassizii), and how to take a really good photograph, just in time for the conclusion of the first THS photo contest. And, the December talk promises to be a good reminder why one should avoid being bitten by venomous snakes. The variety of animals covered by the speakers ranged from a plethora from a particular area (remember Roger’s Herp Potpourri, Daren’s jaunt through South Africa, Hans-Verner’s new species of reptile in Vietnam). But with all the variety, we managed only one talk about a frog or other amphibian – although it was the Goliath Frog (Conraua goliath), the largest species in the world.

2005 Speakers (and abbreviated titles)

Jan.  Taylor Edwards, In Search of the World's Largest Frog
March Daren Riedle, Chasing Lizards in Big 5 Country, South Africa
April Hector Avila-Villegas, Ecology of the Isla Santa Catalina Rattlesnake
May Jay Meyers, The Ant and the Horned Lizard
June Roger Repp, Herpetological Potpourri Part 3
July Melissa Amarello, Banded Rock Rattlesnakes: The Exception to the Rule
Sept. Dale DeNardo, Gila Monsters: Surviving in the Desert
Oct. Jarchow Conservation Award to Jim Rorabaugh
Nov. Manny Rubio, Let's do some Photography!
Dec. Erec Toso and Matt Goode, Using Art and Science to Revise Snake Myths

2005 Lowe Research Fund and Jarchow Conservation Awards

Taylor Edwards
Chairperson, C.H. Lowe Research Fund and J.L. Jarchow Conservation Award, taylore@u.arizona.edu.

C.H. Lowe Research Fund
The C.H. Lowe Research Fund Committee was very pleased to receive several well-written, scientifically strong and worthy proposals for the 2005 funding cycle. The C.H. Lowe Committee reviews proposals blind and decisions are made on a variety of criteria, including quality of research, regional significance, conservation and education application, ability to reuse equipment, and availability of funds. The following two proposals were each awarded $500: Robin Llewellyn, “2005 herpetological inventory on the Esperanza Ranch along the Santa Cruz River, near Amado, Santa Cruz County, Arizona” and Dave Prival, “Long-term twin-spotted rattlesnake population monitoring in Arizona’s Chiricahua Mountains”. In addition, a mid-cycle proposal by Erik F. Enderson and Thomas R. Van Devender was funded based on immediate need to purchase aerial photos used to assist in herpetofauna surveys in Sonora, Mexico. The C.H. Lowe Fund Committee thanks the membership for their continued financial support of this THS Program. In particular, we wish to acknowledge Dr. Daniel Beck who generously donated profits from his new book, Biology of Gila Monsters and Beaded Lizards to the Fund. The Committee hopes that the Fund will continue to grow so that it can support even more regional research projects in the future.

Jarchow Conservation Award
The October THS meeting was held in downtown Tucson at the Hotel Arizona for the presentation of the 7th Jarchow Conservation Award to James C. Rorabaugh, US Fish and Wildlife Service. Dr. Cecil Schwalbe hosted this special event that allowed members to socialize and celebrate in their second favorite habitat (the bar). The award itself consists of an engraved plaque, a written citation, Honorary Life Membership in the society, and $500. The inscription on Jim’s award plaque reads: “Awarded to James C. Rorabaugh for his outstanding contributions as scientist and government official to successful conservation of amphibians and reptiles for over two decades. His depth of knowledge and experience have led to pivotal papers in frog conservation biology, highly regarded, in-depth summaries for key species in herpetological conservation in the Southwest, and effective on-the-ground actions.”
THS Election Results

In the annual November elections the following officers were elected for one-year terms, starting in January 2006:

- President: Young Cage
- Vice President: Kevin Bonine
- Secretary: Robert Bezy
- Treasurer: Kent Jacobs

In addition, Dennis Caldwell, Paul Condon, and Brian Wooldridge were elected for positions on the Board of Directors for two-year terms.

Congratulations to all! And thank you to the departing officers and Board members (Eric Stitt, Marty Tuegel, Cristina Jones, and Roger Repp) for all that they have given the THS.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Membership Information

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<th>Membership Level</th>
<th>Individual</th>
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<th>Family</th>
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To receive a membership form and recent issue of Sonoran Herpetologist call (520) 624-8879 or write:

Tucson Herpetological Society
P. O. Box 709
Tucson AZ 85702-0709

Time to Renew Your THS Membership?

I hope this is a helpful reminder to those of you whose membership renewal is due this month. Please call or email with corrections and errors. 624-8879 or dhardysr@theriver.com

Dave Hardy Sr., Membership Secretary

Due in November

- Melissa Armarello
- Robert Bezy
- Anthony Dee & Sarah Studd
- Stephen Goldberg
- Marc Hammond
- Erika Nowak
- Ali Rabatsky
- Michael & Mary Ann Smith
- Stéphane Poulin & Yvonne Gubersky
- John Reiss

- Kit Bezy
- Young Cage
- Erik Enderson
- Randall & Anna Gray
- Chip Hedgcock & Kim Morrison
- Blair & Deanna Wolf

Membership Update - 5 December 2005

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<td>Hugh &amp; Rebecca McCrystal</td>
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<th>New Members</th>
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<td>Lori Jones Woods</td>
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The Tucson Herpetological Society is dedicated to conservation, education, and research concerning the amphibians and reptiles of Arizona and Mexico.

Tucson Herpetological Society is a registered non-profit organization.

For more information about the THS and the reptiles and amphibians of the Tucson area visit tucsonherpsociety.org