

cnews...

Trespasser Caught on SCC Campus

By: Molly Lamm



An adult Striped Skunk taking cover in Engelmann's Prickly-pear Cactus; photo taken at SCC by Roy Barnes on September 25, 2007.

One Monday evening in September, forensic science instructor Larry Turner was preparing to leave his classroom in the Applied Sciences building. He was conversing with one of his students, when a trespasser snuck in right past them. The daring little visitor – a Striped Skunk – walked along the wall and made its way to the back corner of AP-271 where it hid behind a bookshelf. Turner called College Safety, then stepped outside and waited for the safety personnel to arrive.

Next on the scene were campus security employees Jeff Adams and Steve Meiley. They quickly assessed the situation. Meiley, a certified college safety officer, has had multiple wildlife experiences being called out to remove animals, including skunks. Officer Meiley attempted to flush the skunk out from behind the bookshelf using a dust brush. Unfortunately this provoked a hissing response from the scared animal. Adams and Meiley were standing only a few feet from the

skunk when it lifted its tail and sprayed!

After the animal released its noxious scent, both officers fled the classroom. They decided to leave the door open overnight so the animal could make its way out on its own. According to eye- (nose-) witnesses, Meiley's and Adams' clothing could be smelled from 20 feet away. Indeed, Dr. John Weser remarked that "the odor wafted from the AP building" all the way to his position near Toad Hall. Meiley's uniform needed washing three times to remove the smell, and his boots stayed potent for a full month. Later that week, 3-4 juvenile skunks and one adult skunk were removed from underneath the IT building by a private company.

Despite all the commotion our campus continues to remain a safe and pleasant place to learn thanks to our dedicated and knowledgeable staff.

continued on next page...





continued from page 1...

Unfortunately the classroom where the incident took place was unable to be used for the entire fall semester. When asked to comment on this incident, Professor Roy Barnes (Director of the Center for Native and Urban Wildlife at SCC and instructor for environmental biology courses), shared his usual good sense of humor: "Well, I guess that skunk will go down in history as *applying his own science* in the Applied Sciences Building!"

The Striped Skunk is an omnivorous mammal that lives in ground burrows, often beneath buildings. It is a nocturnal animal whose black and white colorations serve to warn predators of its potent spray. To learn more about this skunk species please visit:

<http://www.scottsdalecc.edu/cnuw/stripedskunk.html>

Special thanks to college safety officer Steve Meiley and Professors Larry Turner, John Weser, and Roy Barnes, without whom this story would not be possible.

Meet the Members of CNUW: Feature Bio: Tricia Quinn-Ortiz

In this issue of "cnews" we'd like to introduce you to a very special lady who has shared her talents and passion for nature since the inception of CNUW in 2000.



Photo: Tricia presenting at the Global Sustainability Conference at District Office on April 13, 2007.

"I was recruited for CNUW when I took "Natural History of the Southwest" with [instructor] Jean [Rigden]. That was when they

were just getting off the ground. So in the beginning I helped set up the vivarium and develop the education program, and I was part of the first crew of tour guides. I also collected and cleaned seeds from Brown's Ranch, did computer input, counted trees in the Brown's Ranch survey, took care of tadpoles, helped in the Great Ranch Re-Leaf, you name it. I came back to CNUW because I wanted to get back into environmental education.

"My favorite CNUW experiences involved Brown's Ranch. I really enjoyed being part of a scientific project, as well as rambling around out in the desert experiencing wildlife. Like the spring day when the catclaw acacia were blooming, and there were hundreds of butterflies everywhere. Or the day we came across a beautiful tarantula and all stood around to admire it for a while.

"I have no current plans to change things in the future. I want to pursue my interest in environmental education but I'm not sure what avenue that will take."

Many thanks to Tricia for her years of dedication.

Meet Your Aposematic Desert Neighbors: Milkweed Bugs!

By: Molly Lamm



Photo was taken at SCC by Dr. John Weser on November 12, 2007.

You may be thinking, what does aposematic mean? Aposematic refers to the warning coloration that some species display as a deterrent to potential predators. Milkweed bugs are bright red-orange and black in color. Just as a stop sign is red for stop, so is this bug! Because milkweed bugs feed solely on the poisonous native plant, desert milkweed, *Asclepias subulata*, they are poisonous themselves.

(For a description of the plant click on <http://www.scottsdalecc.edu/cnuw/desertmilkweed.html>). Their aposematic coloration informs their predators that they are not safe to eat. Milkweed bugs (*Lygaeus kalmii*) are a common desert resident and are easily seen on their host plant.

Milkweed bugs lay their eggs on the milkweed plant in the spring and undergo incomplete metamorphosis experiencing life stages as an egg, nymph and adult. During the nymph stage they look "...very much like an adult but with tiny outside wings that get bigger with each molt," states Jean Rigden, a biology professor here at SCC.

"They often are found together in a mass, compounding the warning effect, especially when they are little," mentions Rigden.



Photo of young milkweed bugs taken at SCC by Dr. John Weser on November 12, 2007.

This is the smallest species of milkweed bug and is in the order Hemiptera along with over 80,000 other species known as true bugs, which all have sucking mouth parts. They are very important in helping to regulate populations of milkweed plants.

Milkweed bugs can be found on the SCC campus in the planters by the Wildlife Demonstration Gardens. To learn more about your aposematic desert neighbor go to <http://www.scottsdalecc.edu/cnuw/milkweedbug.html>

HOLIDAY T-SHIRT SALE AT CNUW

Special sale price in December: \$8
Sizes: M, L, XL, XXL. Available in white and cream, with desert animal designs.
Call the Visitor Center to reserve your T-shirt: 480-423-6730

Happy Holidays!