

EDITORIAL

JRL R.I.P.

I tried to extend the closing of the JRL to volume 50, as this would have been a cleaner number. No such luck, events kept closing in, so here we are at 49 and the end of the line. When Bill Hovanitz developed the idea for the Journal of Research on the Lepidoptera, and established the Lepidoptera Research foundation, Inc to institutionalize the effort in 1962, the future was very different from today. Bill envisioned an open academic platform for good works for understanding ecology and systematics of the Lepidoptera. His timing followed the beginnings of “New Systematics” and “Evolutionary Biology” as real hot items for study and research a couple of decades earlier by the great evolutionary biologists Theodosius Dobzhanski, Ernst Mayr, George Simpson, Sewell Wright and others. Butterflies and moths served well as metaphors and experimental subjects across natural history biology. These insects were charismatic but also structurally highly suited for certain specialties as population ecology and behavior.

Interest in all of nature politically peaked as well, concerns for the environment were worldwide and youth took interest in higher education especially concerned with biodiversity and promoting conservation. Although all groups of living organisms commanded scholastic attention, work with Lepidoptera enjoyed outsized attention. Appropriate Journals covering most fields metastasized. The world of academic publishing burgeoned by providing means of evaluating articles by review processes so comparative ratings became *de rigueur* and competitive styles established to parallel socio economic criteria of the developed world. Science publishing became big business. Robert Maxwell seduced scientists to develop “Big Science” with his publications model.

Systematics and related academic fields reached their zenith in the latter half of the 20th century. Genetic molecular biology was born and rapidly became the hard science base because of its value in providing applications for improving human life. Not

Received: 2 October 2017

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to be ignored by all this was the sudden rearing of the ugly head of monetization. Monetization changed everything, for the western capitalistic academic world at least, with its profound relationships still sinking in. The commons and private property were churned together with increasingly hostile social class attitudes set in motion. Most societies reached for a life style never before seen, and in the reaching brought on what seems to be irreversible environmental damage. Our beloved Lepidoptera are declining almost everywhere, in lockstep with most other plants and animals. Whether any of this is reversible remains to be seen. In the meantime we humans are feeling many pressures.

Comforting delusion maintains most. Coming back to the city after apple picking excursion to the countryside a few weeks ago, I suddenly noticed the windshield effect on our car. The many bless the clean glass and absence of annoying bugs. Hello?

So extinctions are a characteristic of the publishing system as well.

I am not as angry about terminating the JRL as for realizing the environment that supported it is disappearing. The citizen scientists burgeon in special arenas (Monarchs), but the intellectual generalists and particularly kids at natural history meetings are clearly on the way out. Facebook and Instagram now provide the dopamine that swallows our goals of sweeter times.

We cannot thank Konrad Fiedler sufficiently for the effort he devoted to preserve and expand the idea of the JRL. In spite of his exemplary work, we were unable to reach a viable subscriber base. He implemented strong review policies and attempts at soliciting manuscripts. Nancy Vannucci was able to support him in processing papers rapidly and professionally. All in spite of providing the services without charge. Both gave far above the call of duty. Nancy worked on the JRL for over ten years. She learned a great deal and contributed much to the entire process of producing the Journal as well as managing reviews, etc. Nancy become highly proficient in language including editorial comment, on top of which she managed all the logistics. She was a great resource and cannot be thanked enough.

All that is left to say now is:

So long JRL, sorry we're leaving the building.

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