Swingers Evolve

Promiscuous insects engage in an arms race, reproductively speaking. And having many mates stimulates the evolution of new species, says a Swedish group writing in the 12 September issue of the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

Lookin' for love.

To root out the evolutionary consequences of mating behavior, Göran Arnqvist and colleagues at the University of Umeå in Sweden compiled behavioral and genetic information on thousands of insects, including flies, mosquitoes, beetles, and butterflies. A male fruit fly, for instance, thwarts a female's ability to gather a smorgasbord of sperm by including a protein in his seminal fluid that inhibits normally randy females from mating with other suitors. In other species, females adapt to male tricks and pull a few of their own, such as selecting which sperm they'll use to fertilize their eggs. The researchers compared related groups in which one clade engaged in such conflict between the sexes and the other did not. Then they simply counted the number of species in each group.

The results were dramatic, Arnqvist says. Speciation happened four times as fast in clades in which females mated with many males. Other factors, such as the size of an insect's geographic range, don't account for the difference. Evolutionary biologist Bill Rice of the University of California, Santa Barbara, says the research points out the importance of reproductive adaptations as a major driver of speciation.

Ice Mecca at 0° Longitude

Cairn over Scott's grave.

An Antarctica exhibition at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, U.K., will give goosebumps to fans of the frozen continent. "South: The Race to the Pole" profiles three men who vied to reach the South Pole first: Roald Amundsen, Robert Falcon Scott, and Ernest Shackleton.

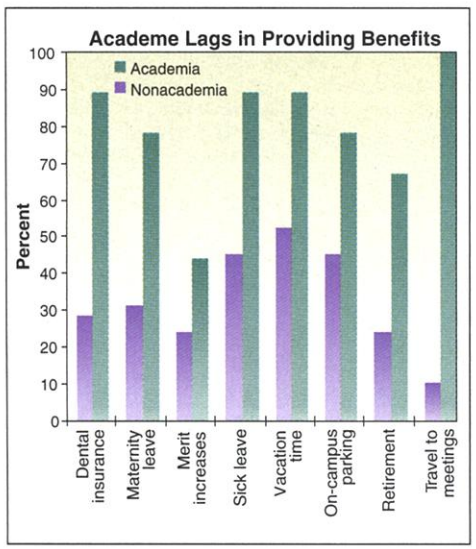
A blast of cold air greets visitors to the exhibition, which opened last week and will run until September 2001. Inside, eye-popping artifacts—from Amundsen's wolf-skin jacket to the doomed Scott's final journal—help tell the heroes' stories. Exhibits add new details to timeless stories of how Amundsen's team beat the ill-equipped Scott party to the goal in 1912, and how Shackleton's ship, the *Endurance*, was crushed by pack ice in 1915—and yet all hands were saved as a result of his death-defying dash across rough seas for help. But the exhibition also shows that the explorers weren't all bluster and bravery—for example, Shackleton's letters to a lover (on display for the first time) reveal that the revered leader was tortured by self-doubt.

The three men all died while exploring the ends of the Earth, but no death is more haunting than Scott's. The last page of his diary conjures an image of the frost-bitten explorer and two companions huddled in a tent only 18 kilometers from a resupply depot: *"We shall stick it out to the end but we are getting weaker of course and the end cannot be far. It seems a pity but I do not think I can write more."*

Going for the Winged Victory Gold

This year's Albert Lasker Medical Research Awards honor three researchers who deciphered a system that tags proteins for destruction and two who discovered the hepatitis C virus and made blood transfusions safer. In the basic research division, ubiquitin researchers Aaron Ciechanover and Avram Hershko of Technion-Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa and Alexander Varshavsky of the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena bring home the gold. For their hepatitis C research, Harvey J. Alter of the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, and Michael Houghton of Chiron Corp. in Emeryville, California, win the award for clinical research. The Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation also issued a special lifetime achievement award to Sydney Brenner of Molecular Sciences Institute Inc. in Berkeley, California. Brenner was honored for introducing *Caenorhabditis elegans* as a model system and other contributions to genetics. The winners get up to $25,000 and a statuette of the Winged Victory of Samothrace.

A Postdoc by Any Other Name ...



Might get a little more respect? Postdocs play a crucial role in the U.S. scientific enterprise, but their employers can't agree on what to call them. As *Science* reported last week (p. 1854), a National Academies committee argues that a common definition would help to clarify postdocs' temporary status, affirm their role as apprentices, and make institutions more accountable for their well-being. The report also included a survey of 40 major research universities and government and industry laboratories that documents how postdocs wear many labels and often miss out on benefits and other employment perks—especially in academia. The complete report, "Enhancing the Postdoctoral Experience for Scientists and Engineers," features dozens of recommendations and is on the Web at www4.nationalacademies.org/pd/postdoc.nsf.

WHAT POSTDOCS ARE CALLED

Name	Percent
Fellow	50
Employee	40
Trainee	35
Associate	22
Faculty	12
Student	12
Staff	10
Other	22

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