

Thirty-eight years of THE TACHINID TIMES



by James E. O'Hara & Shannon J. Henderson

Canadian National Collection of Insects, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 960 Carling Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0C6, Canada. E-mails: james.ohara@agr.gc.ca, shannon.henderson@agr.gc.ca

Forty years ago, as the senior author toiled away on a study of the world *Siphonini* in a graduate student office in far-off Edmonton, the idea of a newsletter on tachinids began to take shape. The world was different back then. If I wanted a reprint from an author, or had a question for one of the esteemed tachinidologists of the day (and there were many¹), or wished to communicate with another graduate student², then I had to mail a letter and wait a few weeks for a reply to arrive by land, sea or air.

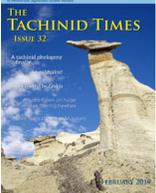
It seemed to me as my correspondence grew that everyone was busy with their own or joint projects and knew relatively little about what others were doing. This was the nature of communicating by mail. Computers and printers had recently replaced typewriters and carbon copies but e-mail and the World Wide Web were still years away. Perhaps, I thought, there would be interest in a newsletter devoted to tachinids that could keep everyone informed about the research interests of others. I discussed this idea with Monty Wood in Ottawa and he offered to be co-editor of the first issue. We sent out a request in 1987 for news that could be published in the inaugural issue of *The Tachinid Times*, and in March 1988 the first issue was printed, photocopied, and mailed to tachinidologists around the world.

The Tachinid Times was successfully launched in 1988 but faced uncertainty for a couple of years due to the retirement of Monty in Ottawa and my graduation from the University of Alberta in 1987. Monty withdrew from the newsletter and focused on other activities, in particular the building of a field station in Monteverde, Costa Rica and taking on the task of identifying the tachinids being reared from caterpillars in Area de Conservación Guanacaste, Costa Rica by Dan Janzen and his team. I was busy with a contract studying the life history of nematode eyeworms (*Thelazia* spp.) in face flies (*Musca autumnalis*) and was pursuing my tachinid interests in my spare time. But then, in the fall of 1989, my future and that of *The Tachinid Times* became more certain when I was hired at the then-named Biosystematics Research Centre on the Central Experimental Farm in Ottawa, home to the Canadian National Collection of Insects, Arachnids, and Nematodes.

The production of an online "html" version of the newsletter started with issue 9 (1996) and then the ability for us to post PDFs online began with issue 14 (2001). The distribution of the newsletter gradually changed from physical copies being mailed to institutions and individuals to PDFs sent via email to those on the Mailing List. Colour images were introduced in issue 14 (2001) and images in general became a more prominent feature of the newsletter as technology improved for both typesetting and image management.

¹ Arnaud, Chao, Cortes, Crosskey, Draber-Monko, Dupuis, Guimarães, Herting, Kugler, Mellini, Mesnil, Richter, Sabrosky, Shima and Wood.

² Andersen, Barraclough, Cantrell, Tschorsnig and Woodley.

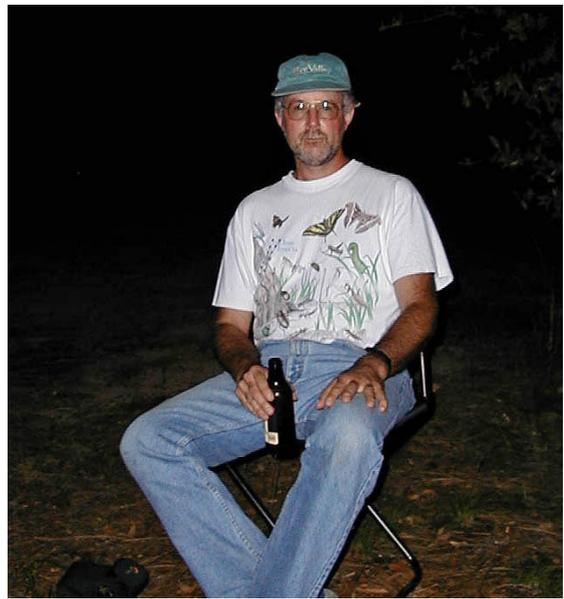


The current style and layout of *The Tachinid Times* was introduced in 2013 (issue 26) when its production shifted to Adobe InDesign. Shannon took over the technical and artistic aspects of the production stream, as well as the management of its online presence on our [Tachinidae Resources](#) website. Jim focused on editing submissions and interacting with authors.

The current issue, number 39, marks 13 years of the current iteration of *The Tachinid Times*. This will be the last for the team of Jim and Shannon, but hopefully not for the newsletter itself. We will canvass our colleagues over the coming months to see if an individual or team would like to take over production of the newsletter. Please reach out to us if you are reading this and wish to get involved.

Over the coming months, Jim will be transitioning to an Honorary Research Associate with the Canadian National Collection and Shannon will be transferring to another role within Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Our best wishes,

J. G. O'Hara *Shannon*



Top Left. Shannon in her office in the Diptera Unit of the Canadian National Collection of Insects on the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa, Canada, July 2006. Photo by Jim O'Hara.

Top Right. Jim in Ida Canyon, Huachuca Mountains, Arizona, USA, August 1999. Photo by John Stireman.

Left. Shannon and Jim in the Diptera Unit of the CNC, February 2026. Jim is holding a drawer of Australian Tachinidae. Photo by Scott Brooks.