

Book slated on biologists' adventures

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SPECIAL TO THE SUN

Find out Monday in the ASU Hall of Science what drug smugglers, poison sumac and killer whales have in common. They are all included in a new book by ASU biology faculty.

The book, titled "Adventures in the Wild: Tales from Biologists of the Natural State," will be presented to the public and available for sale on Monday. The book-signing ceremony will take place in the Hall of Science of the Lab Science East Building of the Jonesboro Campus of Arkansas State University at 2 p.m. Dr. Dan Howard, vice chancellor for academic affairs and research at ASU, will preside over the ceremony, which is open to the public.

The book, published by the University of Arkansas Press, tells the field stories of several faculty members of the Department of Biological Sciences at Arkansas State University.

Adventures big and small

Their adventures range from amusing to life-threatening. The stories will take the reader from the chicken houses of Arkansas to the caves of Venezuela and Mexico to the coast of Alaska. Some stories are filled with suspense and danger in exotic places while others document more routine biological field work and lab work in less-threatening environments.

Readers will meet the roommate with the rash that wouldn't clear up, a friendly bull, some blind cave fish, killer whales, life-saving and life-threatening drug smugglers and hairy roots that are used to produce new medicines. Other stories will remind readers of their own encounters with green persimmons, black seed ticks and fire ants. Camera buffs may enjoy the chapter on wildlife photography.

The different chapters will show ASU college professors to be real people who get their feet wet and their hands dirty in their pursuit of knowledge. It will show them to be people who are sometimes funny and who sometimes make mistakes, but who are always determined.

You will meet the professor who crawled through rotten-egg-smelling muck in search of an elusive mosquito fish, and the one who found himself on the ground, face to face with a wild hog. You will dive into the cold black water of the White River in search of



"Adventures in the Wild: Tales from Biologists of the Natural State" is written by faculty of the Arkansas State University Biology Department.

mussels and fly with bush pilots in Alaska. You will learn about salamanders in a mine shaft in Arkansas that will be featured in a British Broadcasting Corporation documentary. You will learn your computer keyboard probably has more bacteria on it than your commode. You will learn about established techniques used by biologists to study populations of wild animals and new techniques developed by ASU researchers. One story involves international intrigue and the intervention of then-Attorney General Janet Reno.

All true, all local

All of these stories are true adventures written by faculty. Contributing authors are Jim Bednarz, Al Christian, John Harris, David Gilmore, Richard Grippo, Tanja McKay, Fabricio Medina-Bolivar, Tom Risch, Aldemaro Romero, Stan Trauth and Staria Vanderpool. Some of them wrote more than one chapter.

The preface of the book is written by Dr. Christian Samper, then-acting secre-

tary of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. The book was edited by the two authors of this article.

This is probably the first book ever written that contains in a single volume the personal stories of faculty members of the same institution explaining all kinds of adventures they have had in their professional lives.

The proceeds from this book will go to fund biology initiatives at ASU, including the development of the Biodiversity Center, which is expected to become the prime Arkansas Museum of Natural History housing more than a half-million specimens of plants and animals from ASU collections.

For more information contact the ASU Department of Biological Sciences at biology@astate.edu.

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