

Remembering William P. Mull and his Magnificent Minutiae through his Photographs.

A San Francisco kid, William P. Mull grew up with Asian Americans and got interested in oriental language and culture at an early age; going on to become an oriental language expert with the US Army. His first love as a photographer on the mainland was photographing slime molds.

Bill and Mae Mull moved to O`ahu, became active with Hawai`i Audubon Society in the early 1970's, met up with Wayne Gagné, Steve Montgomery, and Frank Howarth, and began to look at the world through different eyes. These were the days before digital imagery and instant results; he spent hours first in Manoa and then in Volcano at his dining room table which got rapidly taken over with rearing vials, microscope, photo rigs, and carousel projector with mini screen at the ready to check on results when they came back from the developer...no instant viewing! All of these close observations gave him time to really observe and learn about each critter; gave him a better chance at photographing them and led to the many whimsical names that cause many a chuckle, but were descriptive and unforgettable, such as the "underground tree cricket". The green plant bug was the first photographic challenge after eye surgery; it became the frontispiece to Wayne's dissertation published by the Museum in 1997.

The "rogue's gallery" you are about to enjoy are images that hung in Bill's house in Volcano and lovingly curated by Rick Palmer for this tribute to Bill. Please bear in mind that many of these are over 30 years old, some may have a bit of mold; but they will take you back to a time when many of us would come running when a new batch of slides would come back from Kodak. This tribute was my way of introducing Bill to those who never had the pleasure of meeting him in person or seeing his wonderful gallery, and a way for those that did to smile and see them together here. Enjoy the journey. Other than the happyface spiders (which Bill had names on), I have not captioned this stroll down memory lane.

Happyface spiders (*Theridion grallator*): "First lady" the original, where it all began (Steve Montgomery, 1972, Pu`u Pane, Wai`anae Range, O`ahu). Who knew where this would lead? Happyface spiders became one of the most celebrated critters, attracting and inspiring a gaggle of grad students, faculty, and other enthusiasts including puppeteers. Another amazing assemblage: The big eyed hunting spider ("notice the headlamps on Percy" Bill would say), then look at "Clarence" who became known as the small eyed big eyed hunting spider and then Frank's penultimate discovery "Clara" the no eyed big eyed hunting spider.

Steve once again set off another amazing set of discoveries with predatory caterpillars in the moth genus *Eupethecia* (from Ms. Brown, to the Green Grappler); shortened to pred lep. Frank and Klaus Sattler (then Keeper of Entomology at British Museum) went on an Easter egg hunt to Poamoho and Bill photographed the eggs, then watched them hatch and dine out on native flies. His Kamehameha butterfly series went from funny feet caterpillar to chrysalis ("notice the mother of pearl inlay" was his apt description), and the adult with open wings went on to grace the cover of the book *Hawaiian Insects and their Kin*, which Bill collaborated on with Frank in 1992. He would be very pleased that Pulelehua is now our official state insect.

Bill collaborated with Al Hart and others to increase awareness of the plight of native snails (Al went on to propose the entire genus *Achatinella* for listing as an Endangered Species). Bill even included a shot of snails in the book he and Frank collaborated on, because they were attributed to "sing" in the Hawaiian viewpoint; though scientists said it was crickets singing, in case you ever wondered why it was in the cricket section! Mom and keiki: a classic Mull composition.

Bill enlarged some of his favorites such as the green lacewing, crab spider, and a jewel-toned tetragnath spider. The dancing dew fly *Drosophila prastopalpis* was another of his favorites. My own favorite was the fruitless fruit fly *Phaeogramma hispida*, a tehrpitid that occurs in *Bidens* stem galls on West Maui; he named this portrait, which graces my office, as "Here's leking at you". Thanks for the memories, Bill, for being a catalyst and an inspiration to an amazing assortment of characters and the critters they chased. Your humor and whimsy will live on; "Big Mamma" will continue to carry on, and perhaps this photographic journey will inspire some of you to carry the banner for our Magnificent Minutiae: the Stinkless stinkbug, head chemist, and others. There were three general periods in Hawaiian entomology: exploration (1778 – 1850), resident naturalist period (1820-1900), and the modern period (1890 to present); although I would slightly alter it to say that the last quarter of the last century and into the first decade of the new century was the Bill Mull period! My love and aloha to each one of you.....Betsy Gagné