



NEW WAY TO WASH  
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# Santa Monica Daily Press

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THE GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS ISSUE

## Taking care of business

### Chamber joins countywide business lobbying group

BY MELODY HANATANI | Daily Press Staff Writer

**DOWNTOWN, L.A.** The Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce is hoping to have its voice heard in Sacramento, joining more than 44 business organizations across Los Angeles County in the formation of a lobbying group.

Business leaders announced on Tuesday the creation of the Los Angeles County Business Federation (BizFed), kicking off a new coalition that represents the interest of more than 70,000 businesses and the 1.2 million people that they employ.

The chamber, which represents close to 1,000 businesses in Santa Monica, is one of the founding members and will have a hand in setting the advocacy agenda for the coalition. The

director of government affairs for the chamber, Samantha O'Neil, will serve on the coalition's board of directors.

"The coalition is bringing all the voices together," O'Neil said. "The more people, the stronger the voice, the easier it is going to get heard."

The issues near and dear to the business community here cut across jurisdictional lines, matters such as congestion and parking, public transportation and workforce housing, O'Neil added.

Currently, the various business organizations and chambers individually have their own lobbyists. In Santa Monica, the chamber has been a supporter of causes like the Exposition Light Rail and Subway to the Sea and issues related to sustainability.

The new coalition brings together all of those different voices into one loud shout.

"We are bringing all these diverse businesses together to talk about the same issues and to advocate for jobs, growth and creating a better community in Los Angeles," O'Neil

said. "We know that improving communities (has) improved the business environment as well."

To join, organizations have to pay anywhere from \$100 to \$500 depending on their revenue, according to BizFed's Web site.

The new organization is meant to give more lobbying power to the larger business community in the county, both emulating and countering other advocacy groups, including one of the most powerful in Los Angeles — unions.

While the group is a response to how organized some of the other groups are, it isn't just about labor unions, O'Neil said.

"We look at that model and say it's working for them why not try it for us as well," she said. "Los Angeles County is so diverse just in space and types of different businesses and types of problems and solutions out there, it's good to get them in one room and advocate for them."

Maria Elena Durazo, the executive secretary-treasurer for

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Photo courtesy SMC

## SMC student group discovers unknown species of spider

BY MELODY HANATANI

Daily Press Staff Writer

**DEATH VALLEY** When Luis Suarez spent a hot September afternoon collecting every ant and spider in sight, the college sophomore did so with aspirations of being the Christopher Columbus of entomologists, hoping to come across a bug whose species was undiscovered.

The long shot of an opportunity came true for Suarez and his fellow Santa Monica College classmates earlier this month when they learned they had picked up an undiscovered species of jumping spider.

"I was hoping it would happen because the (National Park Service) told us that it hasn't happened before in Death Valley and there's always a possibility to discover a new species," Suarez said on Tuesday. "I was looking everywhere ... in the weirdest places, like under bushes."

The environmental studies student was among the more than 30 SMC students that participated in Professor William Selby's one-unit field studies course in the fall semester, spending a three-day weekend in late September studying the geologic history of Death Valley.

As part of the trip, the students spent one afternoon assisting the National Park Service (NPS) in its efforts to catalogue all the plants and animals in Death Valley, picking up nearly every living creature they saw crawling across the sand.

**BEING EXTRA CAREFUL:** SMC student John Speargas uses an 'aspirator,' a device that allows a person to suck up small animals and safely deposit them into a glass or plastic vial without hurting them and without the need to handle the creature.

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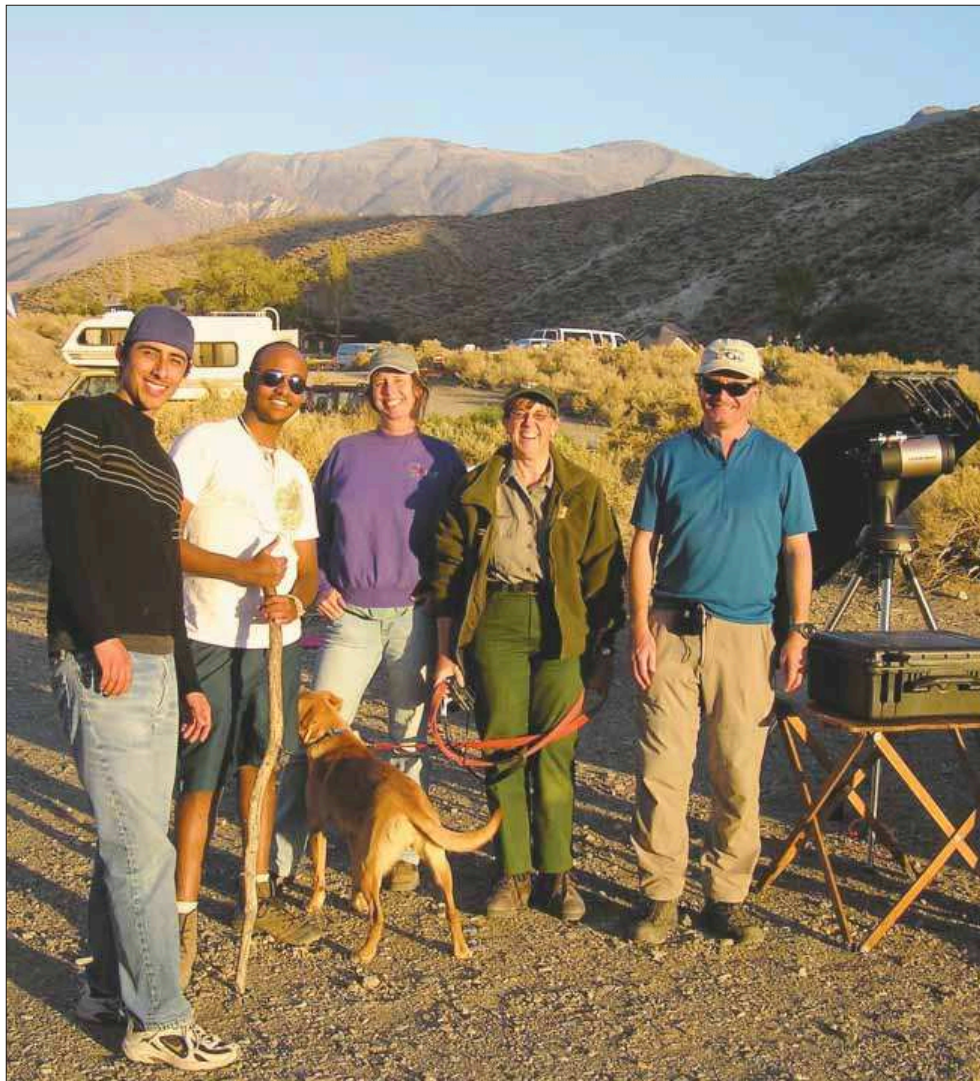


Photo courtesy SMC

**PROUD STUDENTS:** A group of 30 SMC students took part in Professor William Selby's (right) one-unit field studies course during the fall semester, spending a three-day weekend in late September studying the geologic history of California's Death Valley.

# Students wait for species to be catalogued

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The specimens, which included more than 300 ants and 21 spiders were sent to an entomologist in New Mexico who recently notified Selby that among the bugs was a spider whose species has not yet been identified.

Out of the 11 species of ants picked up, one has never been seen before in the United States, said Susan Teel, the director of the California Mediterranean Research Learning Center, an NPS program that works with Selby's field courses every semester.

According to experts, there are more than 40,000 species of spiders that have been identified, approximately 3,000 of which can be found in the United States.

Selby, who has offered the field courses at the college for more than 20 years, said on Tuesday that it is often university researchers and graduate students that typically discover new species, not community college students.

"It's often university researchers discovering new species all the time and there are millions of species on the planet we still haven't catalogued or identified so you can see our goal is mainly education," Selby said referring to the intent of the one-unit field course. "We don't do as much research at a community college ... so it's a little bit more unusual for us to go out and be able to collect a new species."

Three different groups of students each ended up collecting the unidentified spider species, the specimens were found at 4,000, 9,000 and 10,000-foot elevation, Teel said.

"The fact that the students were part of the discovery adds a level to the learning experience," Teel said. "You just can't duplicate that."

It could take years before the spiders are assigned a species name and properly identified in scientific publications. The students could have a say in the name of the spider species, however, Suarez said it hasn't crossed his mind.