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Dear Dyrce,

Thanks for much for your most interesting reprints. First, my apologies for the long silence. It has been some busy year so far, and it doesn't appear that it will be less hectic in the coming months

First has been a long year of problems with my right knee, beginning shortly after my hip surgery (also on the right side). I sought medical advice back in March, and about that very time, I managed to twist it and tear a tendon so badly that I was in a brace and on crutches for some time before "graduating" to a cane. When matters didn't improve much at all, arthroscopic surgery was performed, and it was determined that the knee was in very bad condition. Shortly thereafter, the decision was made to completely replace the knee. So now I am relearning to walk. There is still a good bit of swelling and stiffness, so I must go to physical therapy twice a week and do a multitude of exercises at home each day, as well as spend time with the leg elevated and packed in ice. But progress is being made, and hopefully it will be as good as new eventually.

During all of this, I have continued to work, although more slowly, on the New Zealand hermits, that were supposed to have been completed last December. Additional materials that have come in, a host of taxonomic problems, and distractions to the contributions of my French colleagues have delayed everything for a good long time, but it does look as though I will be able to finish things up within the month. I certainly must try, as I still have another promised manuscript to complete before I leave for South Africa on October 22.

The South African trip has been contemplated and delayed for a couple of years now, but this time it does appear that it will actually happen. I will spend the first week at the Museum in Cape Town, where I hope to review their hermit crab collections. Then it will be north to Umtata on the Indian Ocean side of the country to spend the next month at the University of Transkei, where an Italian colleague and I will raise and work with crab larvae. At the end of November, I will go on to Phuket, Thailand, where I will be one of a number of participants in a workshop on crustacean biodiversity sponsored by the Zoological Museum of the University of Copenhagen. I expect to return home on December 22, after having traveled some 26,000 miles plus.

On the more personal side, I acquired a Standard Schnauzer puppy (EJ by name) in February, who is now a nine month old bundle of energy and mischief. The now almost two year old Neapolitan Mastiff (Miranda) and he make a good team, and manage to keep themselves occupied with canine games so that I can get some work done in between exercises, ice packs and the like required by the knee. Just prior to my surgery, I lost my oldest Giant Schnauzer, so the canine crew now numbers only four, which at least for the present is quite enough. I will have a college student live here at the house and take care of them during my absence.

Briefly -- the events of the past several months in a "nut shell". I am so pleased that you are able to continue to work with barnacles. Hope all else goes well for you too.

Fondest regards,

Pat