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Contact: Rachel Somma
Communications Coordinator
75 Stuyvesant Place, Staten Island, NY 10301
P: 718.483.7117
RSomma@StatenIslandMuseum.org

For Immediate Release

Staten Island Museum joins American Museum of Natural History for massive entomological research project

(Staten Island, NY – November, 2012) It seems like a scene from an old horror flick: up in an ancient attic surrounded by boxes of pinned insects and a human skeleton, sits a young man brooding over a 100 year old Cicada specimen. Yet this is today, and the young man, twenty-four year old Alexander Bolesta, is holding a bar-coding device and records each of thousands of insects.



*Specimen collection room where the cicadas are housed at the Staten Island Museum.
Photograph by Alexander Bolesta*

Mr. Bolesta is an intern from the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), which partners with the Staten Island Museum to conduct a massive entomological research project known as the Tri-trophic Database-Thematic Communities Network project (TTD-TCN). The project will combine information on plants, plant-eating insects, and their parasitoids from over 30 museum collections across the country into one comprehensive data base.

As luck would have it, Mr. Bolesta, is a native Staten Islander and resident of St. George. A graduate of Drexel University with a Bachelor's degree in physics, Mr. Bolesta has long been interested in natural history, going back to when he was eight years old, and was enrolled in the

Staten Island Museum's Earth Camp. More recently, he was an animal care intern in the education department at the AMNH, and when the current opportunity arose to assist in the Tri-trophic Database-Thematic Communities Network project, he seemed like the perfect person for the job.

Mr. Bolesta's role in the TTD-TCN consists of going through the Staten Island Museum's 35,000 specimen cicada collection, barcoding each one and entering them into a central database. Entomologists will use the information gathered from all of the collaborating museum's collections to examine the relationships between plants, their predators (plant-eating insects) and the parasitoids that prey on the predators. This information will be useful to those working in the fields of agricultural science, conservation, ecosystem studies, climate change and biogeography.

About the Museum's Cicada Collection

Founder William T. Davis was known as one of the world's cicada experts in his time, and his passion led to the Museum having the second largest cicada collection in the world, composed of some 35,000 specimens, and representing Davis' life's work. While at the Staten Island Museum, Davis formally described over one-half of the cicada species in North America. This collection contains many type specimens originally described by Davis.

Volunteer & Internship Opportunities at Staten Island Museum

Like the American Museum of Natural History, the Staten Island Museum greatly values its interns and volunteers, some of whom have gone on to have successful careers in the field they studied at the Museum. As a multidisciplinary Museum, there are several diverse opportunities for interns to explore a variety of fields from History, to Natural Science, to Art Conservation, and Education as well as office management and marketing.

All Internships are unpaid positions but may be eligible for school credit. For more information and to find out how to apply, please contact Renée Bushelle, 718.483.7134 or RBushelle@StatenIslandMuseum.org.

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About the Staten Island Museum

Founded in 1881 and celebrating its 131st year, the Staten Island Museum, New York City's only general interest museum, engages visitors with interdisciplinary exhibitions and educational programs that explore the dynamic connections between natural science, art and history based on its diverse collections. The Museum welcomes about 80,000 adults and school children to a comprehensive array of programs every year. Located two blocks from the Ferry Terminal, visitors can embark on a voyage through time in the Staten Island Ferry exhibit; see rocks glow in the dark in the Hall of Natural Sciences; and experience the lives of Staten Island's first inhabitants. In Building H on the Snug Harbor Campus, visitors can explore the latest exhibitions in the History Center Gallery, or make a research appointment for the History Archives & Library. Staten Island Museum is owned by the City of New York and benefits from public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. For current exhibitions, visit StatenIslandMuseum.org

Visitor Information

Staten Island Museum (St. George)

75 Stuyvesant Place

Hours:

Monday – Friday: 11:00am – 5:00pm

Saturday: 10:00am – 5:00pm

Sunday: 12:00pm – 5:00pm

Universal Accessibility

Recommended Admission

Adults \$3.

Students & Seniors \$2.

Members & Children under 12 FREE

History Center & Archives

1000 Richmond Terrace, Snug Harbor, Bldg H

Hours:

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 10:00pm – 4:00pm

By appointment only.

Contact Cara Dellatte at 718.483.7122

History Gallery Hours

Tuesday – Friday: 1:00pm – 4:00pm

FREE