

A tribute to Tom Vincent

Tom Vincent and I first met over lunch in the 1970s. I was in Tucson on a research trip. He was already a member of the University of Arizona faculty. Tom brought his colleague, Bean San Goh, who was also visiting, because he and Beans had just published a paper about predation theory (Vincent, T.L., Cliff, E.M. and Goh, B.S., 1974: *Trans. ASME: J. Dynamic Systems, Measurement and Control*, **96**: 71–76). Right away I saw that Tom is a real nice guy.

Two other things about Tom struck me at that meeting. First, he knew an immense amount more about mathematics than I did. I was awed. Second, he knew almost nothing about natural selection. I was worried.

Yet, here we are today some 35 years later, and Tom has led the effort to make natural selection relevant for community ecology. The theoretical study of living things in the context of dynamic games opens doors we never imagined existed. *G*-function analysis brings new levels of understanding to ecological relationships. Together with his colleagues, Tom allows us to dream of the day when we will actually understand the evolution of niches and the ecological diversification that results. Of course, that will also mean treasures for the conservation biologist. How will the species that are alive today respond to the novel pressures that are moulding their behaviour and interactions? And how can we use that knowledge to prevent their extinction?

As this collection of newly contributed papers shows, Tom's talent and skills extend in many directions. This is so true that *Evolutionary Ecology Research* will have to continue the collection in a subsequent issue (May 2009). It is a privilege and an honour for us to tip our hats to such an influential mind.

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